Week ending January 5 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

My gamble to make soccer history
by MATT BUSBY

The Philby Treasure
by NINA WARNER HOOKE

Duel in the Deep
by JON CLEARY

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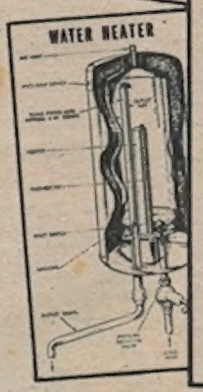

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Photograph posed by a model

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TEMPLE BAR 2468 JANUARY 5, 1957 VOLUME 101 NUMBER 2636

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

With her husband, Nina Warner Hooke lives in a show cottage

It was just another country-house sale. Nina Warner Hooke and her ex-journalist husband, Gil Thomas, didn't expect to find much there, but they make a point of never missing the opportunity of picking up a bargain. As they expected, there was only junk left after the dealers had taken their pick.

Then Nina Hooke saw something that made her bid. For fifteen shillings she got an assortment of chipped crockery, hideous plaster statues—and a Ming vase. "I admit I didn't know it was Ming at the time," she says. "But the moment I touched the surface of that vase I knew I had something out of the ordinary." Now it holds pride of place over the chimney-piece. And, unlike the vase in her story, *The Philby Treasure*, which begins on page 7, Nina Hooke's may be handled by any visitor brave enough to do so.

The junk-heap at that auction provided the sort of challenge she can never resist. When in 1947 her husband was advised to leave London and take it easy in the country, they solved their problem by buying a neglected row of old quarrymen's cottages in the Isle of Purbeck. "It was just ruins and rubbish," Nina Hooke recalls. "Now it's a showpiece—our goal and heart's desire, a dream come true."

With a large garden to look after, a household to manage, and the pleasures of the Dorset countryside to enjoy, Nina Hooke finds that only the demands of her bank manager will persuade her to sit down to write. Nevertheless, ever since her first novel was published in 1933, when she was twenty, her output of novels, stories, articles and plays has never dried up.

But she refuses to be tied down to a routine or regular hours. "I write when I have to, and then only when I feel like it. Otherwise I might as well go to an office every day." Instead, she goes down the cliffs to the sea—beachcombing.

JON CLEARY, whose story *Duel In The Deep* begins on page 12, first began writing for magazines when he was in the desert during the war. He was serving with the Australian forces, and he found that writing whiled away the boring hours.

Since then story-writing has done much more for this thirty-nine year old Australian: it has given him and his wife and two daughters the chance to live much as they liked, where they liked, in many different parts of the world.

Cleary has always been determined to write only of the places and people he knows. So when, some years ago, he visited the pearl fishermen of Northern Australia, he was eager to seize the opportunity of going out with the boats. "The ancients I met there still remember the good old days, when pearl fishing was a major industry. But now they live in ghost towns. . . ." Good pearls are still in demand but many women, Cleary's wife among them, are just as happy with the cultured variety. "That's fortunate for me," he says, "but hard luck on the pearl fishermen."

In our house
we always have Ricory

Quick coffee drink on the right lines... delicious economy!

Ricory—the really good instant coffee drink that brings down coffee-time costs! Ricory—the delicious blend of fine coffees and chicory with the tempting aroma and grand full flavour all the family enjoy. Ricory—made in a jiffy and made by Nestlé's, so you know it's really good. Ricory dissolves as you pour on hot water—just a teaspoonful to the cup, with milk and sugar to taste. You get forty-eight cups to a tin—wonderful value!

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HEMOTABS

Free Speech

● **Has Britain room for soccer?** ● **Art with an eye on business**

● **Giving homes a place in the sun**

I THINK that in a few years' time our national games of soccer and cricket may die out.

Recently I was in Australia, and there I saw magnificent swimming pools in every town, and tennis courts in every suburban street. I was told that boys wouldn't sit about in pavilions waiting for a few minutes' batting when they could play tennis or swim all day long.

Returning to Britain, I found my two sons despairing of soccer, because to play it properly they needed twenty other boys, a referee, changing rooms and a marked-out pitch.

There isn't space here for cricket and soccer pitches which are used by relatively so few people. If we changed our national games we might breed a lot more champions.—V. M. M., Maida Vale, London.

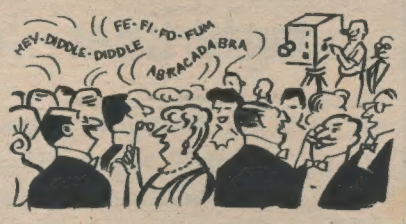
Conductors' Reward

Your series about Selfridge's, *No Name On The Door*, reminded me of a Christmas in the early 1920s, when I was a London bus conductor.

In those days there were no regular stopping places for buses, and we would call out the name of Selfridge's store for passengers wanting to get off there. At Christmas the driver and conductor of every bus passing the store received a Christmas pudding from Selfridge's as a mark of the store's appreciation—a very happy gesture.—F. MATHERS, Ashburton Avenue, Ilford, Essex.

Conversation Pieces

In quite a few stage plays, and films, while the leading actors and actresses are playing their parts, there is often a crowd of minor characters or extras



apparently engaged in conversation just behind them. I have often wondered what they talk about. Is it the events of the day, or just pretence at talking?—A. E. BAKER, Tonbridge, Kent.

"On the stage, minor players sometimes mime or just converse quite naturally in low tones—about anything," says an expert. "In films, extras often say things like 'fish and chips,' 'rhubarb, rhubarb,' 'cheese' and 'queen of hearts,' with perhaps an occasional pair talking intelligently."

What Is An Antique?

We see thousands of shops up and down the country calling themselves "antique" shops. But exactly when does an article actually become antique?—S. MARKS, Jamieson Road, Liverpool, 15.

"There is no clear-cut definition of antique, and comparatively modern articles are often sold by antique dealers," says the British Antique Dealers' Association.

For duty-free entry into Britain as an antique, an item must be at least one hundred years old. For it to qualify for entry into the United States it must have been made before 1830, and in the case of Canada, before 1847.

Commercial Artist

I greatly admire the enterprise shown by an art student I know in attracting buyers for the pictures she must sell in order to continue her more serious studies.

At weekends and holiday times she goes into the countryside and sets up

her easel in front of an old inn. She says that it is only a matter of time before curiosity brings out "mine host" to look at her painting, and if he likes it asks to buy it.

She can't command high prices, of course, but if ever she becomes famous there are innkeepers all over the country who could cash in on her vogue.—MISS H. K. PALMER, Gloucester Avenue, London, N.W.1.

Widows' Claim

It may be sad that some women don't know what their husbands earn ("Free Speech," November 24), but what about those who find they may not have been left anything at all on their husbands' death?

I am told that a man can leave his estate to whom he likes—and many do. But a man's money and prospects cease to be his alone on marriage.—I. ALLEN, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks.

A lawyer says: "Courts will always consider an application by a widow and make provision for her out of her late husband's estate where it is reasonable and necessary—even though it may be contrary to his wishes."

No Rebate

A foreign friend who recently spent a month in Britain brought his portable radio set with him and stayed at a house not covered by a radio licence. At the Post Office he was required to pay £1 for a full year's licence, despite the fact that he would be here for a short time.

My own radio and television licence is now due for renewal, but I am leaving to live in Canada in six weeks' time. For these last few weeks I want to use my television set, but it seems that I shall have to pay £3 for a full year's licence in order to do so.—M. L. C., Orpington, Kent.

"No rebate can be made on a wireless licence," says the G.P.O. "The law is that a person must take out a licence, but no provision is made for a refund for shorter periods."

Wrong Line

I, too, am interested in telephone manners ("Free Speech," December 8). I am employed by a large engineering firm which makes considerable use of an internal telephone system. With a few exceptions, girls speaking on the line are pleasant and well-mannered, while the men tend to be abrupt and impatient, and sometimes even downright rude if the information or person they seek is not immediately available.

Some of these men are very nice people—until they lift the receiver.—MRS. M. A., Northern Ireland.

Towards Economy

The problem of economizing with coal could have been solved years ago if we had had architects with vision. In the country, and even in country towns, if new houses had been built facing south, they would escape the cold and wet autumn and winter winds, while the living-rooms caught the sun.

In our case, since living in a north-south house, we have burned one bag of coal fewer a week and have been warmer, too.—H. ECCLES, Cross Hills, Keighley, Yorks.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

WILL it ever look like her living-room again . . . ? Well, with a mechanical excavator instead of a vacuum cleaner and a hungry bonfire in the garden there's a chance. But Coleman's cover hostess must be absolutely heartless. After the party, balloons and funny hats must be shown their places very firmly or they'll live to make a mess another day—when they're found under the carpet at spring cleaning time. . . . Yes, the living-room will probably recover. But it might be an idea to send out some more invitations this morning; to a *working* party.

SEE PAGE 29 FOR RESULT OF COVER CONTEST NO. 11

Wonderful what this

ORANGE·A·DAY TONIC

does for you!

Nutrition experts now advise an "Orange-a-Day" to keep the Doctor away. Why? Because fresh juicy oranges are packed with pick-me-up —full of the Vitamin 'C' you need every day to give you a surge of summer health through these treacherous winter months.

ENJOY WHOLE FRESH Oranges

– they're ten times as good for you!

Only by eating the whole fresh orange can you get ALL the health value of oranges. Ten times as good for you! Ten times as delicious!

Fresh in now—Mediterranean Lemons! Enjoy their wonderful aroma and fresh tang with fish, in puddings, on pancakes!

Just Dandy!

this new flavour in Batchelors Baked Beans

Introduce your family to Batchelors Baked Beans with the "just dandy" new flavour! They'll be delighted with these tender, tasty beans wrapped in a rich, sweet-and-spicy tomato sauce. Your family will be wanting them *often!* So get some today!

BB30/1294

We move fast in

BRITAIN'S NEW NAVY

IT IS NOT ENOUGH for the Royal Navy to keep abreast of the times; it must keep ahead. Changing world strategy makes new demands—the Navy must foresee them. Science develops new weapons, new apparatus—the Navy must anticipate them.

With these quickening advances in the design and equipment of Britain's New Navy goes another important advance—**higher pay and better conditions of service.**

More than ever, these days, officers and men of the Royal Navy must be quick thinking and alert. More than ever, they must be specialists, experts in one of the increasingly technical aspects of modern scientific development. The importance of the work they do and of the skill with which they do it, **is recognised in the new higher rates of pay which took effect recently.**

"Bold, Dark and Gay"

"These are the Class names of our Fast Patrol Boats, and the names of the boats themselves have a fine ring to them—Bold Pathfinder, Dark Adventurer, Gay Bombardier, and so on. A name to remember too, is Grey Goose, for she is the first of a new class powered by gas-turbine engines of revolutionary design.

"They're armed either as gun-boats or as torpedo-boats. But whatever their armament, their duty is the same—to operate in coastal waters where the bigger ships can't work and where speed and agility are vital.

"How fast do they move? Well, . . . about 40 knots, call it 46 miles an hour. So they're sometimes called on for out-of-the-ordinary jobs like rescue work, or even 'cloak and dagger' operations."

"I'm signing on—and so is my brother"!

"Talk about changes! I've been six years in the Navy and as a Leading Engineer Mechanic, with **the new pay rates**, I get nearly £8 a week, and all found—over £2 a week more than I was getting before. So I'm signing on for the new 9-year engagement.

"My kid brother's just joined up, too. He's not called a 'Boy' in the Navy now, he's a Junior Engineer Mechanic. At 15½ he's a jump ahead of the chaps who join later on and miss the training he's getting at H.M.S. Ganges."

There are many branches in the Royal Navy* and when you join you will be helped to choose the branch in which you will do best. What you want to do now is to find out more about the Navy and what it has to offer.

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THE PHILBY TREASURE

What a fabulous find! Margie was rich beyond her wildest dreams. But would she know how to buy happiness for her son?

by NINA WARNER HOOKE

ILLUSTRATED BY OSTRICK

"Well I'm blowed!" said Margie. "It seemed just a plain, common sort of thing"

DID you ever know anyone who had a divine inspiration? The question cropped up at a dinner-party we gave recently, and of course it drew the inevitable counter-query on the nature and meaning of inspiration.

All the saints in the calendar could be said to have had it, in one form or another. So also could some of the worst monsters in history. Hitler claimed to be divinely inspired when he launched the second World War. At the other end of the scale there was my great-uncle Phineas, who said he was divinely inspired when he forecast the Derby winner of 1908 and won a large sum of money which saved him from going bankrupt.

The thing was argued all round the table and, by the time it came to my turn, I had had a reasonable time to think it out and offer an opinion. I said that I thought true inspiration could be

narrowed down to saying, or doing, the unerringly right thing without warning or preparation in a moment of personal crisis. It didn't only occur, I said, in the case of saints and tyrants or even notable eccentrics like my great-uncle Phineas. It was just as likely to happen to humdrum people like ourselves.

Before I could be shouted down I went on to tell, over dessert and coffee, about the time divine inspiration came to my friend, Margaret Philby, as ordinary a woman as you would find anywhere.

Margie and I—she was Margie Mulligan then—were at school together. We were not exactly bosom chums, but we moved in the same set, which tended more to athletic than academic honours. Both of us were distinguished performers in the gymnasium and on the hockey field.

We were a pair of bobbed-haired, red-cheeked, bouncingly healthy English schoolgirls. We left at the same time, having scraped through matric, and then, as so often happens in spite of faithful promises to keep in touch, lost sight of each other—with no particular regret on either side.

We met again, fifteen years later, on the island in the middle of Piccadilly Circus. I myself had greatly changed in appearance, so I was not surprised when she gave me a blank look in answer to my greeting. Margie I would have known anywhere, for she was the same apple-cheeked, sturdy figure as when I had last seen her. The only difference was that she wore a tweed suit instead of a gym tunic. I explained who I was, and she dropped her parcels and threw her arms round my neck in her old boisterous way.

"Well, I'm blowed!" she cried. "Fancy meeting you again."

After that we saw each other often. It was odd that, as married women whose circumstances were widely different, we became closer friends than we had ever been as schoolgirls when we shared the same classroom and the same dormitory.

I met her husband and her son, and liked them both. Bob Philby was a cashier at a tyre factory in one of the western suburbs. They lived in a rented stucco villa in an endless row of similar dwellings along a roaring arterial thoroughfare.

They had married when Bob was invalided out of the army towards the end of the war. Their son, Robert, was nine. It was characteristic of the situation that, though father and son bore the same Christian name, in the child's case the diminutive was never used. Robert was an *enfant sérieux*. Slight, pale and of an intelligence beyond his years.

"I don't know wherever he gets his brains from," Margie would say, "but he's going to make his mark in the world all right. He could read the newspapers before he was four. He loves school and you can't keep him away. His teacher's ever so proud of him."

So was his mother, that was clear, though she tried to hide her feelings under a show of casual heartiness. They were a close-knit trio, content with their few pleasures and with each other.

At first I was diffident of inviting Margie to our Knightsbridge flat, for fear that she might be embarrassed by what, compared with her own modest way of life, might seem ostentatious luxury. But I need not have worried. She was ready enough to admire, but not to envy. Covetousness was not in her nature.

"My goodness!" she would cry, clumping from room to room in her thick, serviceable shoes. "Aren't you grand! You did well for yourself and no mistake—marrying a stockbroker."

It was as a result of one of her visits to me that the whole thing happened. She had come into town for a day's shopping and had dropped in to have lunch with me. I was refurnishing my drawing-room at the time and Margie took

an instant interest in the alterations planned. When she got home that evening she was full of ideas for making her own little living-room more comfortable and attractive.

"I tell you what," she said to Bob. "Let's get rid of that daft old china cabinet that takes up so much space and buy ourselves a Chesterfield settee, one of those gorgeous deep springy ones that we can pull up to the fire and curl up on in the evenings."

"That's a very good idea," Bob said. "We'll do that, if we can raise enough on the cabinet to help pay for it."

"We ought to. I know it's old, and it may be quite valuable."

The cabinet was one of a number of things that had come to Margie on her mother's death some years before. She rang me up next day to ask my advice on the best method of disposing of it. I had not particularly noticed it on my visits to her, in that overcrowded room, but from the description she gave me over the telephone I was inclined to share her view that it might be of some value. I offered to mention it to an acquaintance of ours, the owner of a famous West End antique shop at which my husband was a frequent customer.

"I'll see if I can get Mr. Weissberg to come and look at it," I said. "He won't mind doing me a favour. If he likes the cabinet, he'll probably make you an offer, and from my knowledge of him I can promise it will be a fair one. You're likely to do better that way than by sending it to a saleroom and taking a chance on what it fetches."

A few days later Mr. Weissberg duly turned up. The sight of his large chauffeur-driven car parked outside 14 Maybury Villas caused a deal of peeking from neighbours' windows and sent Margie into what she later described as "quite a tizzy."

Mr. Weissberg, an elderly Jew of Austrian descent, was an imposing figure, tall, grey-bearded, immaculate. He greeted Margie in a kind and courteous way and followed her into the living-room. She drew aside the card table that stood in front of the cabinet, so that he could get a better view of it.

He stopped dead, a yard or so inside the room, and stared, saying nothing for several moments. When he spoke it was in quite a different tone, hoarse and shaking with excitement.

"Where did you get *that*?" he asked—and pointed with a stabbing forefinger.

"What, that white vase?" Margie said, astonished. "It's just one of the bits and pieces that came from my old home. I think my father picked it up somewhere. He used to potter about junk shops in his spare time. It's nothing much, is it? Bob keeps pipe cleaners in it."

"Give it to me, please," commanded Mr. Weissberg, still in that odd hoarse voice. "Be very careful how you move, in case that rug should slip on your polished floor."

Speechless with surprise, Margie opened the cabinet, took out the vase, shook the contents out of it and handed it to the old gentleman. He reached for it as tenderly as though he were taking into his arms some palpitating living creature. He lowered himself carefully into a chair and sat there, silent again, turning the vase over and over in his long yellowish fingers, stroking and fondling it.

At last he looked up. He said, with a sigh: "When you are telling this story to your friends, as you will do, there will be many who think me either foolish or mad. Perhaps I am both. You see, I am not going to do what another in my position would do—that is, offer you ten shillings for your vase in the reasonable certainty that you would sell it to me. Instead, I am going to tell you the truth about it. But first I must ask, are you in any present difficulty? By that I mean, in need of money?"

Margie was more baffled than ever, but she managed to say, "No, I can't say we are. We don't have anything to spare, but we get along all right."

"I am glad," said Mr. Weissberg, "because I would like you to keep this vase and not sell it to me or to anyone else—until the day when you may have special reasons for doing so."

He stood up and glanced round the room, his gaze taking in the whole assortment of its contents—the varnished modern sideboard, plain chairs, faded chintz curtains, framed print of a Turner seascape, silver-plated cup on the mantelpiece (Bob's, won for small-bore rifle shooting). On the china cabinet he bestowed no further attention.

"It is my belief," he went on, "that it is good for all of us to possess, if we are so fortunate, one thing of absolute beauty on which our eyes can rest when we seek relief from the sorrow and ugliness of the world we live in.

"Look at your vase, Mrs. Philby—look with the new eyes I am giving you. See its delicacy, its marvellous whiteness—only equalled by newly fallen snow. See the perfection of the shape, the translucent glaze that makes it shine as if it had been dipped in liquid light. Come, stand beside me while I hold it up to the window so that you can see what perhaps you have never observed before, that underneath the glaze there is an exquisite pattern engraved all over the surface."

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Margie. "I never saw that before. It seemed just a plain, common sort of thing."

"I thought as much," said Mr. Weissberg, permitting himself the ghost of a chuckle. "But now you know better. Your vase, Mrs. Philby, is a treasure such as few people possess today—which is not surprising, for it is five hundred years since such things were made, and only by a miracle has it remained perfect. It is a poem in porcelain, made for an emperor's palace in the time of the Ming dynasty of China."

"Good heavens!" Margie stammered. "I suppose it's worth a lot of money then."

"It is worth," said Mr. Weissberg reflectively, "a great deal more than this whole house and everything in it. And its value will become higher and higher as the years go by, so great is its rarity. I count myself privileged even to have seen and handled it." Mr. Weissberg paused. Then he shot out another of his unexpected questions. "You have children?"

"Yes, one. A boy."

"The worth of this vase could send him, when the time comes, to a university. Or it could buy him, if you prefer it, a business of his own. It represents for his parents a capital sum of several thousands of pounds."

"Good heavens alive!" Margie said. It was the only way she could express her feelings. "What on earth shall I do with it in the meantime?"

"You shall put it back where you took it from, my dear. The cabinet, you understand, does not interest me. It is a thing of small account, not bad, not good. And it is the only place here where your treasure can be housed; safe from careless hands. You must keep it locked. And you must also remember to lock up your house when you go out. News of such a possession soon leaks out, and a thief who understands these things would take great risks to steal it from you.

"I do not urge you to insure it against damage or loss, for the premium would be so high that you could probably not afford it. In any case, it is not right that this precious thing should be a liability to you, but only a source of joy."

He handed the vase to Margie and she gingerly took it from him and replaced it in the cabinet.

"If you are wise you will line the shelf and the panel at the back with black velvet, so that

Continued on page 28

Margie found Robert in the living-room. There he stood, stock still, petrified. The china cabinet behind him was open . . .

Battle for a slimmer life

by DAVID MILLWOOD

There is only one cure for surplus inches, say experts like Vivian Sorsbie—eat less. Or maybe fall in love

A WORRIED executive of the J. Arthur Rank Organization recently telephoned Vivian Sorsbie, a London physiotherapist, with an urgent request. One of the film company's leading male stars, who was due to begin work on his next picture in four weeks, had over-indulged himself on a Continental holiday and returned two stone overweight.

"We can't have a pot-bellied hero who is unable to tie his own shoelaces," said the executive. "May I send him along to you?"

Although her clients are nearly all women, Mrs. Sorsbie, who makes a profitable living as a slimming specialist, agreed to see the overweight actor—and to keep his name and his trouble a secret. He arrived next morning at her luxuriously decorated Knightsbridge clinic looking, she recalls, "like a barrel of lard."

"I put him on a strict diet and gave him treatment every day for a month—a thermal bath, deep massage in oxygenated water and more massage afterwards. He lost all his excess weight and was able to face the cameras again."

In the last few months, forty-seven year old Mrs. Sorsbie, an outspoken, husky-voiced Englishwoman with firm, strong hands, has dieted, steamed, kneaded and pummelled excess fat from four other well-known actors, an opera singer, six business and professional men and an equerry to the Queen, in addition to her women clients. Working from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. with four physiotherapists and five assistants, and charging twelve guineas for six weekly visits, she has an annual turnover exceeding £10,000.

Between twenty and twenty-five women, including millionaires' wives, fashion models, stars of show business, sportswomen and housewives come to her clinic every day to take the one-and-a-half-hour treatment. All, for personal or professional reasons, want to reduce their weight, in some cases by only a few ounces. Actresses and fashion models often want only spot reducing—an inch off the waist or two off the hips.

Eighteen months ago, Mrs. Sorsbie was asked to take twenty-seven pounds off a famous actress in three weeks. "Intensive slimming of this kind is only possible with the client's full co-operation," she says. "It requires strength of will to stick to a diet. Many of the bright young things imagine I am going to do all the work. This girl, however, was no trouble. She stuck closely to a very strict diet, came to the clinic twice a day and lost her twenty-seven pounds three days before the deadline."

UNLIKE many of her beauty culture competitors, Mrs. Sorsbie specializes exclusively in weight reduction. Although she treats occasional obesity cases referred to her by doctors, most of her clients are only slightly overweight. Those who are seriously fat, have weak hearts or glandular trouble are sent to a specialist.

"In the autumn I get a flood of wealthy women who want to lose the extra weight they have put on by gorging themselves abroad during the summer." One well-known titled woman has visited the clinic every year since it opened in 1953. Her weakness for rich food and drink regularly overcomes her determination to maintain a sylph-like figure. Another titled woman recently wanted to slim because she had been chosen to act as a lady-in-waiting to the Queen.

Today, more women than ever before in the Western world are trying to get or to keep slim. The demand for aids to weight-reducing has created a huge industry involving chemists, food manufacturers, doctors, scientists, dieticians, masseurs, hypnotists and beauty experts.

There are hundreds of different slimming preparations on the market, from plastic "slim-suits" which claim to enable women to sweat

In an oxygenated bath a model receives massage from Mrs. Sorsbie. One actress lost twenty-seven pounds in three weeks

In her London clinic Mrs. Sorsbie gives treatment to about twenty-five women a day. Her clients include millionaires' wives, film stars—and overweight men

Massage helps to take ounces from specific places. But pills and expensive drugs often do more harm than good, say doctors

off surplus inches while doing the housework, to appetite-reducing drugs, starch-reduced or low-calorie foods, electrical massaging machines and books advocating contradictory methods of dieting and exercise.

In the United States, where seven out of ten women diet regularly or sporadically, pills made from a chemical relative of cellulose which swell in the stomach and create an artificial "full-up" feeling are consumed at the rate of twenty tons a month. In Britain, women spend more than half a million pounds a year on slimming pills, mostly methyl-cellulose derivatives or drugs of the benzedrine type which create an artificial state of well-being and lessen the desire to eat.

Thyroid extract used to be prescribed as a slimming aid, but its results, on normal people, were negligible. Treatment by sex hormones was even more disappointing.

Some doctors prescribe appetite-reducing drugs for their women patients, but others refuse to do this owing to such possible ill-effects as sleeplessness or excitability.

"Although they momentarily cut down the desire for food these drugs have no lasting effect as weight-reducers," says Mrs. Sorsbie. "I never recommend them. Manufacturers of many so-called slimming pills trade on the gullibility of women who crave a magic formula which will enable them to indulge themselves as they please. There just isn't one."

Most experts now agree that excess weight is caused solely by overeating; that faulty appetite control causes overeating; and that the sure cure is to diet. "There is no easy way," says the *British Medical Journal*. "Restriction of the calorie intake only will reduce weight."

Women who seek the easy way are a prey to manufacturers of phoney slimming pills and powders. In a recent report, Howard Bagnall, the Birmingham City analyst, recounts an analyst's findings on two slimming preparations, each of which cost £2 9s. for a small bottleful.

One contained a mixture of sulphate and carbonate of soda and a synthetic detergent resembling one of the popular washing powders. The other contained six-sevenths water; the remainder was a lard-like fat. Before the war, dinitrophenol was sold as a slimming aid until a Swansea woman was blinded by its effects and others died; it was then put on the Poisons List. Another prewar product was found to contain the scolex, or head, of tapeworms.

In spite of warnings about the dangers of indiscriminate dieting, many women unnecessarily starve themselves, says Mrs. Sorsbie, when all that is needed is a more balanced diet. Fear of fatness sometimes drives them to spartan deprivations which do more harm than good.

Mrs. Sorsbie maintains that slimming is an aid to good health, a tonic physically and psychologically. Doctors agree that fat people are more susceptible than thin people to a variety of complaints and diseases, from flat feet to bronchitis, arthritis and heart failure. One stone over normal weight in middle-aged people shortens their expectation of life appreciably. Life insurance companies often demand higher premiums from fat clients over the age of forty.

One American beauty expert ran a thirteen-week television slimming competition. Entrants complained afterwards that they would never be able to keep their figures slim when bereft of each other's moral support. A club named "Overweight Anonymous" was formed; it soon reached a membership of 100,000. The members, of whom one hundred are men, meet once a fortnight to compare weights, confess lapses from their self-imposed regimens and fortify one another's resolve. When a member signals that the call of rich food is becoming overwhelming, fellow members rush to give support in resisting temptation.

Some people are always struggling against a tendency to put on weight but for most people weight is surprisingly constant, despite the varying amount of food consumed: it scarcely varies by more than .5 per cent in twenty-four hours.

Shock, emotional stress, a bump on the head or improper functioning of the glands sometimes affect appetite control and cause excess weight. When Mrs. Sorsbie was running a clinic in South Africa, she was baffled by the failure of her treatment on an Englishwoman whose husband and children had been killed in an air raid.

"I got her down from two hundred and twelve pounds to one hundred and ninety-four pounds but couldn't move her further. Three months later, she wrote to tell me that she had fallen in love again and was dropping weight, without dieting, at the rate of a pound a day."

Vivian Sorsbie was born at Aylesford, in Kent, and educated at Roedean and at McGill University in Canada, where she studied bacteriology and pathology. During the war she helped to build and run rehabilitation centres for airmen in West Africa, until a serious flying accident caused her to become a specialist in slimming.

After the accident, she put on 58 lb. in ten weeks. In order to treat herself, she studied slimming theory, brought her own weight back to normal and then opened a clinic in Johannesburg. Eight years later she put an assistant in charge of the clinic and moved to London.

The popular belief that fat people are happier than others is a myth, says Mrs. Sorsbie, who bases her treatment on the belief that wise, balanced eating not only slims a woman, keeps her fit, banishes fatigue and gives her energy, but makes her better-looking, younger-looking and longer-living.

When Mrs. Sorsbie arrived in England in 1953, she met a wealthy South African friend whose marriage was breaking up owing to his wife's nagging and bad temper. She weighed eighteen stone. "I made her stay in London, come to my clinic every day, keep to a strict diet, and later on spend a few hundred pounds with a plastic surgeon. Her pride would not let her tell her husband about the treatment: she told him she was returning to South Africa for a holiday and wrote letters to him which a friend posted from Johannesburg.

"Six months later, weighing eight stone three pounds, she came up to London on a boat train from Southampton with a sun-ray lamp tan and borrowed luggage with South African labels. On the station platform her husband walked right past her—I had to introduce them. But next day they went off together for a second honeymoon."

THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

Duel in the Deep

OUT on their left, the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria had begun to deepen to purple as the sun sank on their right. The sun rested for a moment on the wild battlements of the Arnhem Land coast. Then it had gone and the tropical dusk rushed down.

"How much longer to Kootapatamba Sound?" Peg Holgate's clean, bold profile was outlined against the dying light of the day. Her features and figure were not the sort you found on chocolate box lids; but then, here in the north of Australia, chocolate-box women would not have lasted as long as the chocolate. Men were known to have called Peg beautiful, but they were men who had lived most of their lives in the wild north, and they looked for beauty that had strength behind it.

"Maybe another hour." Jack Duppa held the wheel of the lugger against the pull of the south-easter. "We'll stay outside for the night, and go in on the morning tide."

"Maybe by tomorrow night we'll know." Peg's voice betrayed her excitement. "Do you think I've come on a wild-goose chase?"

"Yes," Jack Duppa said. Jack had never been noted for his tact or soft approach. "But I've been paid for this job, so I'm not entitled to an opinion."

"Is that all it is to you, just a job?" Peg's soft voice had a sudden edge to it.

"Look, Peg," Jack said shortly, "I'm a pearl-shell man, not an adventurer. I've made a good living at pearl shell, and I'll be able to go on making a good living at it. I took this job because I was a good friend of your dad's, and because I didn't want to see you taken in by some of the other lugger owners."

"You're being paid well."

"No more than I would have got in a week's shelling," Jack said, and watched Peg as she moved angrily away from him towards the prow of the lugger. . . .

He had never had the right approach with women, and least of all with Peg Holgate. They had grown up together in Darwin, the only children of pearling men; but Peg had been interested in other, more chivalrous young men, and Jack had gone his own lonely way.

His father, one of the few white divers along the northern coast, had died from the bends, and Jack had taken over the lugger Cobber. He had left Darwin and gone as far south as Roebourne, roaming the coast past Derby, Broome and Port Hedland, bringing up pearls and pearl shell, making a living but never a fortune, and it had been five years before he had returned to the lazy, sun-drenched town where he had been born.

Peg had come to him the day after his return. When she came out to the lugger in a dinghy and climbed aboard, he hadn't recognized her at first. He only recognized her in the moment just before she leaned towards him and kissed him.

"Welcome home, Jack," she'd said. "Five years, and you never once wrote me."

"Hallo, Peg," he said, and wished she would kiss him again. He half raised his hands to take her shoulders and pull her to him, but then he remembered how she had laughed at his occasional rough attempts at romance in his youth. He had learned a little since then, but not much. The women he had known in the tiny coastal towns had not been the ones to teach him anything about chivalry and romance.

Instead he said: "How's your dad?"

She looked at him in surprise. "Didn't you hear? Dad was killed three months ago."

"What happened to him?"

"I don't know. He was pearling over in the Gulf, and one day he just disappeared."

"Disappeared? Didn't he have a crew with him?"

"Yes, but they saw nothing. They were scared of the place, anyway—Wally, the half-caste, told me that when they got back. When Dad disappeared, they just upped anchor and came scuttling back to Darwin."

"Where were they diving?"

"A place called Kootapatamba Sound."

"I've never heard of it," Jack said. "Pearlers haven't been down there before, have they?"

"No. That's why I wanted to see you." Peg sat down on the stern-rail. There was a diving helmet on the deck beside her and she tapped on it with her fingers before she went on. "Jack, would you take me down there? I want a lugger and a diver, but I can't get anyone else to take me. The word has got around that the place is spooked or something, and none of the divers will take on the job. That means none of the lugger captains will take it, either."

"I've got no diver," Jack said. "That's one of the reasons I came back here—to pick up a good man. My last bloke was taken by a shark."

"I've got a man," Peg said. "Dan Sattain. He'll do the job."

Jack frowned. He said: "I don't know that I'd want Sattain on this lugger. He had a bad enough reputation before I left Darwin. I haven't heard that he's improved or reformed."

"He's worse, if anything," Peg said. "But he was the only man I could get, and he was once a good diver. The job will last only a week or so."

"What are you looking for? Your father?"

"Partly," Peg said, "although I don't think I'll learn anything of what happened to him. Men disappear in these parts and never leave a trace behind them." She was silent for a while, and Jack knew that there was still a deep grief lying like a cancer inside her. Then she looked up. "But I'm going down there for another reason, the reason why Dad went there. He thought there was pearl there, lots of it."

"If there was any there, the luggers would have been down there years ago. There are no fresh beds left."

"This was a fresh bed," Peg insisted. "Dad told me about it in a letter he sent from Indoori Mission, just before he left for Kootapatamba. He had come across some aborigines along the coast, and one of them gave him this."

She took a purse from her pocket and from it produced a pearl. She held it in the palm of her hand, and it glowed warm and rich in the bright sunlight. "It's not a big pearl, but it's a good one. Almost perfect. The abos told Dad there were plenty of them in the waters of Kootapatamba Sound, but for some reason they wouldn't go back there to gather them. They didn't know the value of stones, though they did know that white men valued them. But Dad couldn't persuade them to lead him back to where they had found it. When he wrote to me and sent me this, he said he was on his way to find the bed."

"And he never found it?"

She shook her head, her face turned away from his. "I don't know. But you know what his dream had always been—to find the richest bed on the northern coasts. If it's there I'd like to find it for him. It could be a—a memorial for him."

Jack said gravely: "I think it's a wild-goose chase, Peg. No beds have ever been found down that way. I couldn't afford to take the time off to take you down there on such a wild guess."

"I told you I'd pay you," she said.

"What with?"

She held up the pearl. "This. I've got the house, a few pounds in the bank, and my job with the Administration. This I can spare. I'd like to spend it on seeing if Dad was right. Will you take me down, Jack?"

He hesitated, then he nodded. "All right. I'll need another crew man, someone to act as tender. Do you know anyone?"

"Wally will go back with us. He's a bit ashamed of himself that he ran out on Dad."

"There's no chance of getting another diver but Sattain?"

Peg shook her head. "He's the only one, Jack. But I promise that if we haven't located anything in a week, we'll come back. Sattain should be all right for that long, and I can't stay any longer myself. I had three weeks' leave when—when Dad died."

She crossed to the side of the lugger. She turned and kissed Jack quickly on the cheek. Then she said softly: "Thanks, Jack. Dad always said you were the most reliable man in Darwin. I never believed him."

"Why?" he said. But she had dropped over the side of the lugger and was already sculling away from the side. He watched her go, moving the small dinghy through the quiet water with all the skill of a native boatman. . . .

AND now, five days later, he watched her with the same look as she went forward away from him and stood at the prow of the lugger. It was a look any woman would have recognized, but on this occasion Peg had her back to him.

He turned the wheel over to Needles, one of the Malay boys, and went below. There were three bunks in the cabin, and Sattain, the quarter-caste diver, was lying on the forward one. He turned as Jack came down the stairs, but he wasn't quick enough to hide the bottle from which he had been drinking.

Jack said shortly: "I told you there was to be no drinking on my boat."

The quarter-caste squinted up at Jack, a derisive smile on his thick lips. He said: "A little grog never hurt nobody. You ain't one of them missionary blokes, is you?"

"I just don't have grog on my boat, that's all," Jack said. "Give me that bottle."

Sattain sat up in his bunk. "I ain't working for you, Duppa."

Jack had never been one to waste words in argument. He stepped forward and snatched the bottle from Sattain's hand. Then he turned and went back up to the deck, stumbling a little as he did so. He tossed the bottle far out into

It was a voyage Jack had not wanted to make. . . . But now there was a woman's love at stake and a fathomless fortune—if he could survive Sattain's cold vengeance

by JON CLEARY

Peg was livid. "You're lying!" she told the diver. Jack edged up behind her: he thought she was going to strike the man

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

For eleven hard years he had

dreamed of this homecoming.

Then he found that he was a . . .

STRANGER IN THE STREET

By the rustler's fire in Dirty Creek they branded him with a white-hot iron and left him for dead. But Julius Rupp was a hard man who had to stay alive . . . to avenge the pain, to win back Jessie and the 17,000 dollars one mistake had cost him. The story of a man's vengeance begins . . .

A brilliant new novel by Al Dewlen

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

the dark waters, then turned as he heard Peg cry out from the prow of the lugger. Sattain had come up on deck and stood by the open hatch, a naked knife glittering in his hand.

"You asked for trouble, Duppa," he said, and his voice was just a deeper hiss against the hiss of the water as it slid past the lugger.

Jack felt with his foot for the heavy object he had tripped against as he had come up on deck. He ducked as Sattain moved in on him, and came up with one of the twenty-pound diving boots. Sattain, half-drunk, made a wild stab with the knife. Jack stepped back, then swung the boot hard against Sattain's arm. The knife dropped with a clatter to the deck, and Wally, the half-caste tender, moved quickly in to pick it up.

"Right, Sattain!" Jack said, breathing heavily. "You sleep up on deck tonight. There'll be two of us keeping watch on you. One more fancy move and you'll get this boot through your skull."

Sattain, holding his numbed arm, said nothing. He stared at Jack for a moment, then turned and went forward along the deck. He passed Peg as she came astern, but didn't even glance at her.

"Lucky that boot was there, boss," said Wally, and his white teeth flashed in the dark.

"I should hit you with it," Jack said. "You know all gear should be stacked away at night."

Wally's grin died, and he took the boot from Jack and went below. "You didn't have to speak to him like that," Peg said. "After all, the boot maybe saved your life."

"One of the things I've always insisted on on this lugger is discipline," Jack said. He knew he sounded pompous, but he couldn't help it. He had to say what he was going to say and he knew no way of softening it. "You brought two men on this boat. One of them just tried to kill me, and the other is about as slovenly a character as I've come across."

Peg bit her lip and abruptly went below. Jack went forward. Sattain was not the first diver who had ever given him trouble, but he was the first who had ever drawn a knife on him. Divers were an independent lot because there were so few of them, but Jack had always been able to deal with them in the past. He felt more confident in dealing with Sattain than with Peg.

Sattain looked up sullenly as Jack said: "We'll dive in the morning."

"I'll see how I feel," Sattain growled. "My arm hurts."

"You're lucky it wasn't your head," Jack told him. "But get this. If you don't do the job, I'll see that you're blacklisted from every lugger on the coast. You find it hard enough to get a job now, and I'll make it impossible. You go down for Miss Holgate in the morning, or you're finished as a diver."

He turned and went back to take the wheel from Needles. The Malay boy had watched all that had gone on with frank, curious eyes, but had made no move to help Jack when Sattain had attacked him with the knife. He had joined the Cobber at Broome only two weeks ago, and had yet to make up his mind whether the quiet, gruff white man was worth any loyalty.

"We're just about off the sound now, I reckon," Jack said. "We'll go in on the morning tide, Needles. I'll sleep up here on deck. We'll split the watch—you, Wally and me. And we'll watch that diver feller, too."

But the night passed without incident. Sattain had evidently decided to forget the idea of revenge, at any rate for the time being.

By early morning Jack had relaxed enough to doze off, but he came awake instantly when Wally touched his shoulder.

"Tide's rising, boss," Wally said. "Better get started."

They went in on the auxiliary engine. Peg came up on deck and stood beside Jack at the wheel as they went in through the bright red cliffs. High above the cliffs four eagles cruised like black crucifixes against the saffron sky, and now Jack remembered what Kootapatamba meant in the aboriginal tongue: waters where the eagles drink.

"It doesn't look a good place for pearl shell," Jack said. "You usually don't find it around a coast formation like this."

Peg didn't answer for a moment, and then she only said: "I don't like this place. There doesn't appear to be anything alive but those eagles."

"There must be other things around here. Eagles don't live on air." Jack turned to Wally. "How much farther did you go in with Boss Holgate?"

The half-caste nodded. "Around that bluff up ahead. Water widen out there."

Sattain, sullen as a wild boar, turned as Jack spoke to him. "Sattain, you reckon there'll be any shell in here?"

"I never make guesses till I get on the bottom," Sattain said. "You can't tell much, looking at water from the top."

It was a snub and Jack recognized it as such. His hands clenched on the wheel, but he held himself in. He felt Peg looking at him, but he kept his eye straight ahead and took the lugger in past the high, steep bluff and brought her out into a wide stretch of shining blue water.

"It's almost like a lake," Peg said. "Or a lagoon."

"It'll be the first time I've ever fished for shell in a place like this," Jack said. "Your dad must have been crazy, coming in here."

Peg said nothing; and Jack, knowing he had said the wrong thing again, left the wheel to Wally and went forward to inspect the diving-gear. He stood for a moment and looked out at the shores of the sound.

On the west a white beach stretched for what he guessed must be two or three miles; behind it, green tangled hills rose steeply against the sky. South and to the east were the same red cliffs through which they had sailed, their base sometimes broken by the bright green of pandanus palms. The whole region had an air of loneliness that was depressing, an air that was somehow a warning.

Jack shrugged off the slight chill that ran through him, and began to inspect the diving-gear. Sattain came and stood beside him. He said: "I don't like the look of this. I'm an open-sea diver."

"It all looks the same on the bottom," Jack said. "Be ready to go down in an hour."

They had breakfast, and then they moved the lugger on and Jack took soundings. They anchored where the line showed ten fathoms. Sattain was already dressed in his woollens, his face wet with sweat as the morning sun beat down on him. Wally helped him dress, till finally Sattain's shining, sullen face was the only human identification above the ponderous canvas figure.

The metal corselet was fastened on, the broad leather belt was buckled round Sattain's waist, and the lifeline was attached to him. Then Sattain, like a grey elephant-man, lumbered across to the side. He went over it on to the rope ladder, and waited for Wally to tie the weights on him.

Finally, Jack was ready to screw the helmet on.

"Take your time and have a good look around," Jack said, and screwed the faceglass into the helmet. Sattain stared out at him through the thick glass, then threw himself backwards off the ladder and went down into

Continued on page 31

A dice gambling table opened at Monte Carlo in 1949. Croupiers still marvel at the game's American jargon

The men who cheated at Monte Carlo

As the little green dice danced across the table, the winnings piled higher and higher. But no trick could fool the casino

by TONI HOWARD

ON February 19, 1956, three rather rumpled-looking Americans climbed out of the plane from Paris into the mild winter sunshine of the French Riviera and told the taxi driver to take them to the Ambassador Hotel in Monte Carlo. They made the trip in tense but companionable silence and on arriving at their hotel went immediately to their rooms.

In spite of their American passports, they were not what the *concierge* behind the desk regarded as typical Americans. The obvious boss of the trio was a spectacled sixty-year-old Oriental named Jason Lee, a Korean with a flat brown face, slit eyes and a twice-broken nose. According to his passport, Lee was a Los Angeles business man on his way to Tokyo, where he had important import-export connections. His main reason for coming to Monte Carlo, he said, was not gambling but marine salts, which he wished to buy in the Mediterranean and sell to Japan.

Travelling with Lee as companion and confidant was Philip Aggie, also of Los Angeles, an unassuming little man with gold teeth, long sensitive fingers and quick, observant eyes. Aggie was also supposedly on his way to Tokyo in the interest of marine salts.

The third man was Arif Shaker, a big, laconic, dark-haired Lebanese-American. Shaker, too, was a business man from the Los Angeles area.

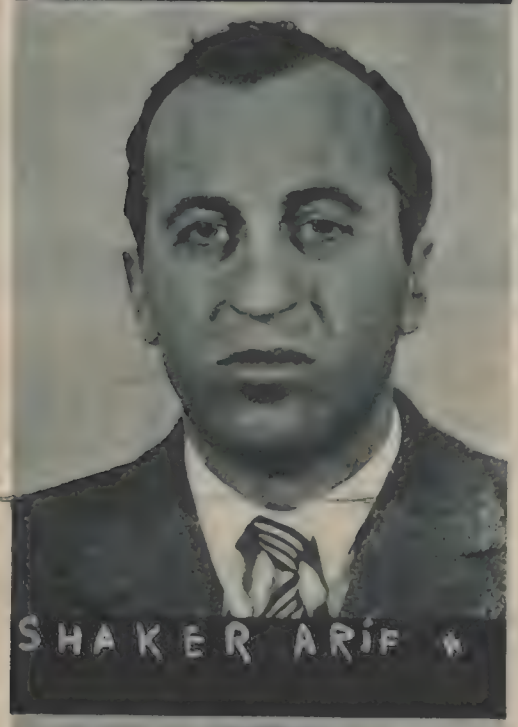
At five the following afternoon, the three men, quiet as always, left the hotel and made their way through the gardens of Monte Carlo towards the casino. On the way they parted company and then, one by one, strolled into the big, draughty, crystal-chandeliered gambling room known to the faithful as "the Kitchen."

One by one, they drifted to the dice table in the back of the room and rather desultorily began betting. By this time Jason Lee and Aggie had been recognized, first by Monsieur Lebroc, the "physiognomist" attendant at the entrance, and second by the croupiers of the dice table. They had spent a week at Monte Carlo earlier in the month, and had lost heavily at dice. Now here they were back again, probably trying to recoup. No one had seen Shaker before.

For almost an hour the dice game went along normally, and then—as this form of entertainment can sometimes do—it got markedly warmer. As Lee threw them, the little green dice were beginning to dance, backed by more and more important money. "Six the point, six is the point!" sang the croupier, shooting them back across the felt towards Lee. And then: "Six the winner!" Lee and company collected their winnings and bet heavily on the next turn. Again they won.

Sensing drama, people began to gather until they were standing two and three deep around the sixteen to eighteen men playing at the big kidney-shaped table. The pile in front of Jason Lee was attaining architectural stature, yet his flat, Oriental face never changed expression. He watched the game, placing his bets and nodding, invariably playing the front of the table marked "Win." Since the top bet allowed at this table is 40,000 francs (about £40), Lee was now distributing chips not only to Aggie, but to strangers on either side to bet for him.

When Lee finally threw a losing combination the dice passed to Aggie. He, too, began throwing winning sixes. Six after six, and then finally a



Lee, Shaker and Aggie were the latest in a long line of swindlers who have tried to cheat Monte Carlo's casino. They carried with them 164 pairs of faked dice—close imitations of the official type used at the casino. They managed to win £4,700

Shaker and Lee panicked and fled to Nice. Aggie (behind coat) was followed by the police when he

seven, and the dice passed to a stranger at Aggie's right. But the croupiers had exchanged a glance.

"For the love of heaven, take it easy, son," Lee advised Aggie quietly, and waited for the dice to come round again.

But at that moment, before the turn with the dice could pass round the table and back to one of the trio, the croupier raked them in, tucked them away in his dice box and threw in a new pair. Disgruntled, Aggie and Shaker left the table, walked out of the casino and went back to their hotel. After a few minutes and a few more bets, Lee cashed in his considerable stacks of chips and followed them.

During the evening the three conferred behind closed doors. By that time the dice were sitting on the chief inspector's desk in a back office of the casino, calipers and scales ready for a thorough examination when the inspector came on duty in the morning.

NOTHING perhaps would have happened if Lee had not lost his *sang-froid*. No one, without additional evidence, could possibly have known which of eighteen players had palmed the fake dice into the game. But Lee rushed back to his hotel, tossed his bags together and moved across to the chic Hotel de Paris. The next morning he left for Nice by taxi, taking Shaker with him and leaving Aggie behind as a decoy.

When the taxi driver got back to Monaco he mentioned his journey to the police. Questioned, Aggie knew nothing of Lee or Shaker. He was as mystified as the police were over a receipt found in his wallet from a Los Angeles firm for $220 worth of loaded dice.

Shaker chose that moment to phone Aggie from Nice to say that he and Lee were waiting for him at the Air France terminal, ready to jump on the first plane that came along. Having tapped the call, the Monégasque police let Aggie go and, while he packed, tipped off the Nice police.

Aggie was followed all the way to the air terminal at Nice, where the French police arrested all three. When Shaker's baggage was turned upside down, the police found 164 pairs of loaded, mismarked and faked dice in three paper cartons and two long wool socks. In cash they picked up about £1,900 from Shaker, and £2,800 in traveller's cheques from Lee, all of it presumably won the day before with the dice.

French police reporters covering the arrest admired the 164 pairs of dice. Many of them lacked a three, or a two, or a five; many were loaded for seven and eleven.

Their only noticeable flaw was that they were a slightly darker colour than the casino's dice—"sea-green instead of water-green," said the casino poetically—and it was this, plus Lee's and Aggie's over-enthusiastic betting, that had tipped off the croupier. On examination, they had been shown by the calipers and scales of Chief Inspector Louis Cérisol to be one millimetre too small and two milligrams too heavy.

Now began a series of shuntings from one French prison to another while the publicity-conscious Monégasques waited for their prince to get his marriage over and get rid of all those American guests and reporters. Sooner or later, the three would have to be extradited back to Monaco and tried, but everyone agreed that it would be poor taste indeed to try three of Miss Kelly's countrymen for cheating and swindling in Monaco at the very moment that she was becoming its princess.

In its one hundred years of existence, the Casino of Monte Carlo has seen many a swindler come and go, and in that time has learned to cope with almost every known kind of gambling dodge. Although Lee and Aggie and Shaker scored two notable firsts—the first Americans caught at it, and the first to smuggle in their own dice—they are only the most recent in a long line of rogues who have tried to prove at the casino's tables that cheating can prosper.

In the 1850s, when the casino was first struggling to establish itself as Europe's off-bounds gambling den, it was a favourite hang-out for international swindlers and cardsharps, counterfeiters, spies, pickpockets and thieves. Crooks congregated freely in the gambling rooms, playing with counterfeit money and even tampering with the roulette wheels. Hold-ups and jewel thefts were common.

Then, in the 1880s, came the bombings, which shook Monte Carlo to its foundations and blew up such a scandal that the casino was forced to take security measures for its own survival.

The first was a time bomb set by a gang of thieves who were going to hold up the casino and everybody in it. The second was planted by a crackpot who had been reading the propaganda of the Victorian "moral-hygiene" movement and wanted to rain destruction on this "large house of sin, blazing with gas lamps by night, flaming and shining by the shore like the habitation of some romantic witch." Both bombs fizzled out, but the lesson was there. To protect itself against both crooks and reformers, the casino had to provide an anti-demolition squad of house detectives.

The swindlers now turned to tampering with the machinery. One of the most successful at this was an athletic young gambler who broke

joined them. They were arrested at the airport

into the casino late one night. With a pair of pliers, he widened the slots of the 15 and 3, and narrowed the slots of the three numbers in between. He won the equivalent of £5,000 on that wheel before the croupier noticed. Another young man with a similar idea went up to Switzerland, where the casino's roulette wheels were made, and bribed a worker in the factory to misbalance one wheel and mark it for identification. For two months he enjoyed a terrific run of luck, until, in his youthful enthusiasm, he pushed it so far that an inspector got suspicious and retired the wheel.

Counterfeiters, too, had some good sport with the casino. In the early years, bets were made in banknotes or coins, usually the French gold louis or the English sovereign, and one of the croupier's jobs was to ring or bite a coin before placing it on a number. One innocent English gambler who had sent home for funds and got a £5 note ran it up to £10,000 before anyone discovered it was literally stage money, as used on the stage of the Drury Lane Theatre. When the casino finally inaugurated the chip system things quietened down for a while, until two enterprising Frenchmen began counterfeiting 200-franc chips.

A MORE ingenious trick was tried in the late thirties, when another four-man combine took the precaution at baccarat of putting a phosphorescent chemical under their fingernails and marking the court cards, as they came up, with tiny flecks invisible to the naked eyes. When that deck came into play again, they raised their stakes and went to work.

This went on for three days, the takings so high that the casino knew something was wrong, but didn't know what. All that distinguished the four was that they all wore dark glasses. Puzzled at the connection between phenomenal luck and dark spectacles, one of the inspectors bought a pair of sun glasses himself and immediately spotted the phosphorescent flecks on the cards. The four were arrested, tried and got three years.

With the development and perfection of a staff of inspectors, such ambitious swindles are becoming increasingly rare. What worries the staff much more now is the petty thief, the surreptitious cheat and, above all, the woman gambler.

"Our mission," explains Chief Inspector Cérisol, a handsome, white-haired Monégasque of superb *politesse*, "is to make it possible for our clients to gamble in tranquillity. And what disturbs the tranquillity is not so much men engaged in the big swindle as women engaged in the little ruse." It's not that women are less honest than men, or "not necessarily," says Cérisol. "But they just don't like to lose."

And so they try their little tricks. There is, for example, *la poussette*, or the little push. A woman sits down at the *trente et quarante* or roulette table and spreads her handbag, papers, notebook and cigarettes in front of her. She makes an even-money bet and then, as soon as even or odd or red or black is announced, reaches a graceful finger around her clutter of belongings and flicks her chip from the losing to the winning category.

She is always paid off the first time, sometimes the second and third. After that, she is politely asked to leave.

Next most popular gambit among the ladies is what the casino calls *"réclamations,"* a gambit especially hard to unmask if the woman in question is an attractive one. What the woman does is to wait until a big gambler, preferably slightly drunk, starts strewing the roulette table with chips. Then, when one of his chips or *plaques* wins, she claims it as hers.

If the man holds out for his chip, then both are paid off, and the second time the lady tries it she is shown the door. But if, as is more usual, the gentleman concedes, there is nothing the casino can do. "The casino," Cérisol shrugs, "cannot control the gallantry of men."

Monte Carlo's security force is now so quiet and efficient as to be virtually imperceptible, but when it moves, as it did with Lee, Aggie and Shaker, it moves swiftly. The casino will not say how many inspectors it has on its payroll, but there are about two hundred. They are known as *"les occultes,"* and are popularly rumoured to have eyes in the backs of their heads. In addition, the house had an untold number of tipsters ready to pick up a little extra cash for spotting anything unusual. And, of course, there are croupiers and supervisors.

Outside, not allowed in the casino unless called in, but more or less aching to be called, is the Monaco police force, the strongest in the world for its national area. And beyond that, like a great shadowy net, stands Interpol, Europe's international police clearing house, which tips off all the casinos on the latest cheating system and who is practising it.

One week after the wedding, Lee, Aggie and Shaker were transferred to the tiny prison of Monaco, put through five weeks of interrogation, and tried. Before much more could be said, the entire court settled down to a Gallic discussion of the dice game of craps.

Everybody joined in to explain it to the judge. Everybody, that is, except the three accused, who did not understand French.

"In this game," asked the judge, "do dice pass from hand to hand? If a player wins, does he keep the dice? Can a player keep the dice ten minutes or a quarter of an hour?"

"Yes," said Aliprandi, one of the croupiers involved. "Or he may lose them quite quickly. In which case, he and his friends might show their annoyance."

A witness cut in to elucidate. "This game of craps, in effect," he said, "does not take place in a very silent or distinguished atmosphere. Unlike roulette or baccarat, one says and does many things while playing, while throwing."

A defence lawyer was reminded of a member of Miss Kelly's wedding party who had been much criticized for his attitude at the dice table. "It is said that he comported himself lamentably, slapping his thighs, spitting on the dice and telling them little love stories——"

"Love stories!" said the judge, incredulous. "It is like this that this game is played?"

That settled it. Looking exceedingly stern, the judge gave Shaker six months, Lee and Aggie one year each and 200,000 francs fine.

Two weeks later Prince Rainier, a little less stern and a little less averse to American love stories, let Lee off with his fine and the three months in prison he had already served. THE END

A gambler bribed a factory hand to tamper with a new roulette wheel—so the casino now builds its own. Tests are made every day, ever since a wheel was "improved" with pliers overnight

THE SMALL WOMAN (5) by ALAN BURGESS

Across the mountains with a hundred children

Wounded, Gladys led them on a desperate flight from a ruthless enemy. They walked for days, slept in the open. Now they were without food or water—and new danger hovered overhead

Often they had to form a human chain down the steep slopes, and pass the younger ones from hand to hand

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BERRY

Young Murray Davis with refugee children and Chinese soldiers. During the last war Murray spent years in a Japanese internment camp with his parents

GLADYS AYLWARD tried to laugh. "A price on my head!" But the laughter stuck in her throat. "What am I worth to anybody? The very idea's preposterous."

The orderly sent by a Chinese Nationalist general had roused her late at night in the Christian Mission at Tsehchow, in North China.

Gladys, a tiny Londoner who was once a housemaid, had lived through great perils without being afraid. In her determination to become a missionary she had reached China via Siberia. She had lived through several temporary Japanese occupations. Having become a naturalized Chinese, she had passed information about Japanese troops to the Nationalists—partly, perhaps, because a colonel in Chiang Kai-shek's intelligence service was the man she was going to marry.

Now, as the Japanese approached Tsehchow, she was wakened with the warning that the Japanese had put a price on the head of Ai-weh-deh—the virtuous one—as the peasants called her. She remembered that upon her safety might depend that of a hundred orphaned and refugee children left in her care.

The orderly fumbled in his tunic pocket, produced a piece of paper, and handed it to her. "Those leaflets are being pasted up in the villages outside Tsehchow. They will appear on the gates of this city tomorrow."

She took the leaflet over to the oil lamp to read. The shadows danced across the small handbill, about eight by ten inches in size. It was headed "One hundred dollars reward!" and said, "One hundred dollars reward will be paid by the Japanese Army for information leading to the capture, alive, of any of the three people listed below."

Gladys's eyes scanned the names. First was the Mandarin of Tsehchow; second was the name of a well-known business man famous for his Nationalist sympathies. The third line simply read: "The Small Woman, known as Ai-weh-deh."

The dark figure of the orderly in the doorway did not move. "You must leave by the morning, Ai-weh-deh. I go now. You must leave as soon as the sun rises."

Gladys turned to him, unable to prevent a little maggot of fear suddenly turning in her brain. "Thank you for bringing me this news," she said slowly. "I'll decide something or other; I don't know what."

He detected the note of anxiety in her voice. "I wish you well, Ai-weh-deh," he said gravely. Then he was gone into the darkness; she never saw him again.

She closed the door slowly behind him and walked back to the table. She examined the small poster more carefully. A hundred dollars! It was a vast sum of money to most of the inhabitants of Tsehchow. Without bitterness, she reflected that there were probably many among them who would betray her for half the sum. She did not think of consulting David Davis, the mission chief, in her dilemma. For years now she had made her own decisions without help from anyone; and now that she was a woman with a price on her head, she did not want to involve David in her affairs.

The air in the room felt oppressive. She went to a window and opened it. Darkness hung outside, thick and impenetrable; it was very quiet.

It was obvious that the Japanese had heard of her intelligence work for the Nationalists. Someone had betrayed her. The enemy would have no scruples in squaring the account. Yet she was still reluctant to leave. Her training, her heart and her spirit were all against abandoning her post in the face of the enemy.

There was a Chinese prayer: many times she had repeated its message—*"If I must die, let me not be afraid of death, but let there be a meaning, Oh God, to my dying."*

She did not know what to do, but on impulse reached out for her Bible. It lay on the table next to the leaflet. She flipped it open, then bent forward to read at random the line of Chinese characters. She had never read the passage before, and now she read it aloud in growing awe.

Flee ye! Get you far off! Dwell deeply in the hidden places because the King of Babylon has conceived a purpose against you!

She went to her little box in the corner and began to pull out all her papers and letters. They must be burned before she left. Not a scrap of evidence of any sort must remain. She was still busy when dawn came, but she had completed her task.

The sun was up when she went down into the mission compound, carrying her Bible and the small leaflet.

Mao, the gateman, was peering through the small spyhole in the door when she reached him.

"Mao," she said, "I'm leaving at once. Will you get my mule ready, please!"

His round, fat face turned slowly to meet hers. Usually it was creased in a grin, but now it was serious.

"You must look outside the door," he said. "It would be dangerous to leave now."

SHE stepped past him, and put her eye to the small hole. It gave a view of the roadway which swung back to the left, cut off by the compound wall, and to the right where it rounded the city wall and entered the main city gate. A party of Japanese soldiers was marching through that gate. She stepped back from the peephole, fighting the surge of panic which rose in her throat.

Then she turned and began to walk back across the compound. Her feet moved more quickly, she broke into a trot, then abruptly she was running as fast as she could. The back gate was her objective, the back gate through which, by immemorial custom, they carried out the dead.

The way to it lay through the courtyard, past David's quarters. As she raced through, she suddenly remembered his presence. On impulse she stopped, scooped up a handful of gravel, and hurled it at the glass panes. In a second he was at the window, in his shirtsleeves. His voice came plainly. "You're afraid, Gladys? Why are you afraid?"

Suddenly panic had her in its grip again; without a word in reply, she ran for the back door. It was open, and she went through.

Outside lay the Strangers' Burying Ground, an open stretch of ground dotted with the humps of burial mounds. Beyond was the shallow grass-grown moat which encircled the city, and away to the right stretched a large field of green wheat not fully grown but tall enough to hide her. But she had made one bad error of judgment. Although the front gate was closer to the city entrance, the route of escape from the back gate was overlooked for a much longer distance by anyone advancing along the road.

And on the road, behind the detachment of soldiers she had seen proceeding into the city, were other companies marching at regulated intervals. She had raced right into their vision. The nearest body of troops was no more than a hundred yards away. But she could not stop now; she was committed to flight.

As she raced through the graveyard, she heard the soldiers shouting behind her; then she was conscious of the crack of rifles, the bee-whine ricochets as bullets glanced off the rocks around her. There was a pain in her chest, sweat in her eyes, but the edge of the moat was only a few yards away. She tried to spurt towards it but, almost on the brink, she was suddenly flat on her face, with the dust and grit in her mouth.

She felt no pain, only an intense surprise. She knew a bullet had hit her somewhere. Then she became aware of a burning sensation across her shoulder blades, and, with a quick return to common sense, realized that she was not dying at all but soon might be, for bullets were still kicking up fountains of dust, and ricocheting from rocks all around her.

She tore open the cloth fastenings down the front of her heavily-padded coat. Her Bible had fallen with her; she could feel it pressing into her stomach beneath her. She wriggled out of her coat, sliding it down behind her like a sloughed skin; then, using the Bible as a sledge, she wormed her way forward, pushing with her toes

Gladys Aylward and some of the children before setting off into the mountains. After days of walking the girls' feet were cut and bleeding

and tearing at the earth with her hands. Panting, she reached the shallow moat and tumbled into it.

Her back was burning now. Her heart thumped as she listened to a shower of bullets spattering the discarded coat as the soldiers re-adjusted their aim. It gave her impetus.

Doubled up, she scuttled along the moat until she could see the corn growing above her head. Carefully parting it, she burrowed among the pliable stalks, edging backwards so that she could lift up the slender stems and leave no tell-tale route of crushed wheat behind her.

In the middle of the field she felt fairly safe. She was sorry she had lost her coat, for all she wore underneath was a thin cotton vest, and even in the bright sun she shivered. Now, she could feel the sting of the graze across her back. The bullet had torn through her padded coat and skidded across the right shoulder-blade. But she had bled little, so she was not worried. Her eyes were heavy, and she felt weak. She remembered that she had hardly slept at all the previous night. She curled up into a ball and yawned. She closed her eyes.

She was surprised when she woke several hours later to find the sun high in the sky, and realized that she had fallen asleep. It seemed absurd, even foolhardy, to sleep in such a situation, and yet she was pleased because she felt so much better. She was frightened no longer. When darkness fell, she knew the Japanese would lock themselves inside the city. Therefore she had to wait until the sun set before she could make a break for the mountains.

To occupy her time before dusk, she tunnelled through the corn to the farther edge of the field. As soon as the shadows were deep enough to give her shelter she slipped out of the wheat. She glanced back at the city walls. Not a soul moved in any direction as she hurried across the undulating fields towards the mountains.

It took her two days to reach the Inn of Eight Happinesses which she had established as a mission and her home at Yangcheng years before, and when she arrived she knew what she was going to do. She must go! She must leave this part of Shansi altogether. After the bitter fighting of the past few months, the Japanese would not be merciful towards anyone they suspected. She would take the hundred children —all of them—from the mission and across the mountains to Sian, and find refuge there. That was her decision as she came down the narrow road to the inn.

The children were overjoyed to see her. They crowded around in the courtyard, laughing and chattering. The two mission workers who had looked after them told her that they begged grain from the mandarin and all were well and fed.

Gladys gathered them around her, a sea of brown, smiling, almond-eyed, dirty children, who knew her as their real, true and God-given mother.

"Ai-weh-deh!" they clamoured. "Ai-weh-deh has come to look after us."

"Tonight," she said, "I want you all to go to bed early. Tomorrow, we're going for a long walk across the mountains. A long, long walk!"

There was a burst of spontaneous cheering. A long walk to anywhere was an adventure.

"You must get up early and tie your bedding into a roll and take your bowls and chopsticks with you. Now off you go, all of you, and into bed early. Don't forget!"

They disappeared into every hole and corner of the building. She sighed to herself and walked to the gate. Every house in the little street which led to the inn was badly damaged. As she walked through the East Gate of Yangcheng and along the main street which had been concerned with so many important happenings in her life, she felt a sense of overwhelming sadness for the derelict city. The *yamen* steps were deep in rubble. In the first courtyard she thought of the old splendour, the pomp and officialdom and all the ceremonial litter of thousands of years of courtly behaviour which had preceded her early meetings with the mandarin, that scholarly, feudal ruler who had become her friend. Now there was only one guard at the door of his small chamber.

He recognized Gladys, grinned at her, pushed open the mandarin's door and yelled: "It is she!"

As she went inside, Gladys reflected that in the old days such informality would have cost him his head.

The mandarin came forward to greet her. He wore a plain blue robe and a black skull cap. For a passing moment Gladys regretfully recalled all his wonderful gowns of scarlet and gold. Even his long, glossy pigtail was now cropped to a stubby queue. All Chinese males had done this on Nationalist orders, for the Japanese had found ingenious ways of torturing men with long queues. They thought it uproariously funny to hang a man by his own pigtail.

"Ai-weh-deh," he said gently, "it is good to see you."

"It is good to see you also, Mandarin," she replied.

She looked at him carefully. He was older. Like all the people in Southern Shansi, he had lived the past few years in an agony of doubt and fear. When the enemy came he had fled the city, carried on his civic business as best he could from a mountain village. When they left his city, he returned to its ruins. Neither the Communists nor the Japanese had any time for mandarins; his life was in perpetual danger. But he smiled at her and inquired of her health, and her parents' health, and was anxious to help her.

He listened gravely as she told him what had happened and of her decision to try to reach Sian across the mountains with the children. She could see he was perturbed.

"I have heard that the Japanese armies are infiltrating through the mountain passes and have reached the Yellow River," he said. "You will have to cross their territory. It will be very dangerous."

"We shall stay away from all the known

trails," she said. "We shall follow paths that the Japanese will never find."

"With a hundred children?"

"With a hundred children!" she said firmly. "I dare not leave one behind."

"That is true," he said sadly. He paused for a second. "You have money, food for the journey?"

"Neither."

He smiled, then chuckled aloud. "You have a faculty for facing the formidable, Ai-weh-deh, with a certitude and calm which I have envied ever since you came to Yangcheng all those years ago."

"I've said it to you many times, Mandarin: 'God will provide.' Now you believe that, too?" Gladys said.

"On this occasion, at least, let the Mandarin of Yangcheng act as His agent. I can provide you with two *dhan* [about 260 lb.] of millet, and two men to carry them for the first part of your journey. It will take you several weeks to reach Sian by the route you will have to travel —you understand that?"

"I know. I'm leaving at dawn tomorrow morning."

"May God help you!" he said. "May the good fortune you deserve be yours!"

They bowed low to each other; they were old friends saying farewell, and each wished to convey more of their innermost affection through something more than words. But it was impossible and also unnecessary.

She went back to the inn. The children were stacked in rows on the *k'angs*—communal beds —once used by the muleteers. From the broken balcony she looked up at the star-filled sky and the familiar mountains. She knew in her heart that she was leaving Yangcheng, if not for ever, then for a very long time. Her mind swept back to that day she had first arrived, cheerfully ignorant of all that lay before her. So much work and toil and yet so much happiness had been compressed into those full and useful years; nothing could uproot or diminish those memories. She tried to console herself with the thought that there would be more work to do in Sian when she arrived, but it did not help much.

She wondered how David Davis was faring at the Tsehchow Mission. It was to be many years before she did know the full story of David Davis.

Two weeks after the Japanese occupied Tsehchow they arrested him and accused him of being a spy. They starved him, kept him without sleep, and beat him viciously at regular intervals.

Two of his Christian converts they tied to beams and tortured in an effort to induce them to declare that Davis had conspired against the Japanese. Both refused to condemn him. Both were killed.

Day and night Davis was made to kneel facing a plain wall, and if he fell asleep he was woken every hour by blows. For three months this treatment continued; they did not even dent his spirit or his determination.

They knew about Gladys, but she was out of their reach. They had found a letter addressed to her from an American journalist. Many months earlier he had crossed the Yellow River and penetrated up into Shansi in search of material. Gladys had helped him all she could, and months later he sent her a letter from Chungking, thanking her for her help in supplying him with details of Japanese atrocities.

Unknowingly, he might just as well have sent a death warrant.

Gladys and David were both away at the time. The letter was placed on David's desk and, during some periodic clearing-up process, it fell from the top down between the desk and the wall. Neither Gladys nor David, in their destruction of all personal documents and letters, had located it.

When they searched the mission for the last time, the Japanese did not make that mistake.

As soon as it was thrust in front of David's nose, he realized that if they ever caught Gladys it was the end of her. He declared that he knew nothing of either the journalist or the letter, which was true. But the Japanese were having none of his protestations of innocence. After three months of interrogation he was moved to a Chinese jail at Taiyuen.

The inhuman treatment continued. He was placed in a steel cage with a concrete floor and concrete back wall with twenty other prisoners. It was a few feet square. They were jammed together in a hot, stinking mass with no means whatever of satisfying even the primary requirements of sanitation.

Day and night an electric bulb glared down upon them. At dawn—they knew it was dawn because the warden would give a single order, "Kneel!"—they would kneel, facing the wall. They would stay in that position for hours; if they moved or spoke they were savagely beaten.

Then they would get an order, "Stand!" With heads bent, because the cell was too low for anyone to stand upright, they would crouch immobile.

At night came the last order, "Lie down!" and they would lie on the concrete floor in a packed, contorted row.

ONCE every two or three days bowls of kioliang or maize would be passed in, and a little water. The prisoners would cram it into their mouths with their fingers.

Every few days David Davis was taken out for questioning. He was told that if he admitted to being a spy he would at once be given better quarters and better treatment. He refused. There was a core in the spirit of this man from the mountains of Wales which no physical degradation could destroy.

For six months, filthy, lice-ridden, they kept him in this cell, heaped together with those other pitiful fragments of humanity. He saw neither sun nor moon, nor knew the passing of night into day, nor day into darkness

At length it was the Japanese who admitted defeat. He was transferred into another cell which held only three prisoners; he was accorded slightly better treatment. He spent that time converting one of his fellow-prisoners to Christianity.

Two years after he had been arrested he was sent to the coast to be repatriated as a civilian. There, while waiting for the ship which was to take him homewards, he learned that his wife, Jean, and his children were in a nearby camp. Forsaking the chance of repatriation, he hurried to see them. The boat sailed without him.

His small daughter was ill with whooping cough. A complication which happens no more than once in ten thousand times had set in. In a few hours she was dead.

Davis spent the rest of the war with Jean and the two boys in an internment camp nearby. Today, he lives at Ely, on the outskirts of Cardiff, in a small house, running his own church and community. . . .

At sun-up the young children were up and shouting, running round the courtyard, throwing their bundles of bedding at each other, playing tag.

With the aid of the older ones, Gladys tried to sort them out and feed them. There were nearly twenty big girls, ages varying from thirteen to fifteen, her own adopted children among them; there were seven big boys aged between eleven and fifteen; the rest of the children varied from four to eight.

The two coolies from the mandarin, carrying their shoulder-poles, a basket of millet suspended at each end, arrived at the front gate. Gladys said goodbye to the two mission workers, to several other friends collected there; and, after one last look round the broken inn, they were on their way, the children scampering ahead, dodging back through the gates of the city, shouting loudly that they could walk for ever and ever.

They followed the main trail southwards for several miles. Gladys possessed a whistle which she had obtained from a Japanese soldier months before, and she blew it occasionally to call the more adventurous little boys down from outcrops of rock, and twice to line them all up in rows for a roll-call and to see that no one was missing.

They stopped by a stream to boil millet in the iron pot which Gladys carried; she heaped the

Continued on page 42

The great, fast-flowing Yellow River, which Gladys and the children reached on the twelfth day of their trek. They had to cross it to escape the Japanese. But they found no boats

Jacks are spaced at three-foot intervals round the walls of a sagging building, which can easily be raised by men equipped only with spanners

Pryke watches his invention in action. He believes that it is a promising answer to the problem of subsidence in mining districts

A face-lift rescues bricks and mortar

When sinking ground sends a building tottering, Fordham Pryke steps in. Using his own invention, he can make a house like new

by DON EVERITT

In a North London suburb, a detached house, which cost the owner £4,500, subsided on one side and cracked down the middle: the bank of clay on which it stood had dried out and shrunk. The owner patched the crack, but when he had to leave the district he could not sell the obviously defective house except at a heavy loss. At a surveyor's suggestion, he called in the services of a studious, bespectacled fifty-seven year old Londoner named Fordham Pryke.

The surveyor asked Pryke if he could strengthen the foundations of the house to convince prospective buyers that no further subsidence would occur.

"I'll do better than that," Pryke said. "I'll lift the house back into place so that it looks like new."

The cautious surveyor rejected Pryke's plan, but the house owner, desperate by now, agreed to it. After preparing their ground, Pryke and four of his men successfully raised the subsided part of the house, which weighed about fifty tons, by amounts varying from one to three inches. It took them half an hour. The crack across the centre of the house closed completely.

The operation, carried out with a jacking system invented by Pryke, cost the house owner £350. Merely strengthening the foundations, known as underpinning, would have cost him at least £850 and would have left the cracks. He subsequently sold the house for the price he had paid. "I defy anyone," says Pryke, "to find the slightest trace of subsidence damage in that house today."

Of florid complexion and slow, emphatic speech, Pryke specializes in rescuing buildings damaged or threatened by subsidence, a major blight in Britain's mining areas.

For the National Coal Board in 1952, he transferred an entire seventeenth-century church in Warwickshire from its original foundations to a raft of reinforced concrete. A nearby colliery planned to drive new workings 1,200 feet below the church. N.C.B. engineers called in Pryke to minimize damage from the two to three feet of settlement expected to occur in the next seven years.

Using a system of underpinning which he again had invented, Pryke first cut away the stonework immediately above the old foundations and stood the whole church on about two hundred concrete stools. He then joined the stools with reinforced concrete to form a raft on which, no matter how unevenly the ground beneath moved, the church would move as one. Today, three years after mining began under the church, Pryke reports that subsidence has occurred without damage to the building.

Fordham Pryke heads a small but rapidly growing engineering firm known as Pynford Limited, which has its headquarters in an old, bay-windowed Victorian house in Stroud Green, London. In the firm's ten years' existence, its annual turnover has risen from £18,000 to £80,000; it has doubled in the last two years. Pryke, who has consistently ploughed his profits back into the business, feels highly confident about the future, for in his device for jacking buildings back to their normal shape he feels he has found a promising answer to the pressing national problem of mining subsidence.

Mining subsidence costs Britain millions of pounds and incalculable hardship yearly. The damage has become much more widespread since the Coal Board began intensive mining in 1949. In towns across the Midlands and north of England, whole streets of houses have cracked and crumbled and become uninhabitable.

One out of every ten houses built in South Shields since the war has suffered subsidence damage. Forty-five schools in the Derbyshire coalfields have cracked and sagged in the last ten years. Mining subsidence has damaged five hundred shops and houses in Bolton, Lancashire, and nearly every house in the Church Gresley ward of Swadlincote, Derbyshire. Stoke-on-Trent, one of the worst-hit places in the country, expects to have a subsidence problem for the next 150 years.

In April this year the National Coal Board undertook for the first time to make good or make reasonable compensation for all physical damage caused by mining subsidence to buildings, land, service lines and pipes. This, said

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

Aubrey Jones, the Minister of Fuel and Power, would cost the Coal Board an estimated £5 million a year or "sixpence on every ton of coal mined."

Fordham Pryke says: "No one can stop mining subsidence. It's part of the price we have to pay for getting coal. We can only try to reduce its effect and its cost. My jacking system does both."

A farmer virtually put Pryke into the business of lifting buildings. One corner of his farmhouse subsided and cracked, and Pryke strengthened the foundations with concrete beams. This prevented further subsidence, but left the house at a tilt.

"The farmer said to me, 'Why not dig a hole under the beam, put hydraulic jacks under it and push the corner of the house back into place?'" Pryke did so.

The scheme worked well in several other instances, but it had dangerous faults. "Hydraulic jacks leak and lower themselves, and therefore need constant supervision. They will not reverse, so we couldn't afford to push a building even a fraction too high."

Soon, Pryke developed his own screw jack. It consists of two metal bricks linked by a large bolt. A spanner opens or closes the bricks. Men working one jack apiece at three-foot intervals around the walls of a house can raise it with ease. The jacks are made to open two inches at a time. Numbers of them have supported buildings steadily for a week and more while Pryke's men have bricked in the gaps created by the jacking.

"The problem that bothered me most in the early days was that we had always to put concrete beams under a building before we jacked it up. This was because it was commonly believed that a brick building was a solid block which had to be moved in one piece. I had a sneaking idea that buildings were really quite flexible, and that with my jacks I could reproduce the settlement in reverse."

Pryke had the chance to prove his theory when a client asked him to restore a large garage which had sunk unevenly, severely cracking the walls and jamming the doors and windows. Pryke offered to do the job for a nominal £80 and to build a new garage if his experiment failed.

"We banged holes in the walls immediately above the foundations, put in our jacks and started raising them at varying speeds according to the amount of settlement. The garage straightened out beautifully, and the doors and windows came free. And we made £10 profit."

Having proved the flexibility of brickwork, Pryke has since used the jacking system widely on houses and larger buildings, including a church. He raised one house to satisfy the rigorous terms of an insurance policy which stipulated that in the event of subsidence the property had to be "restored to its original condition." Pryke says: "Without jacks, there would have been no alternative but to pull down most of the house and rebuild it."

When one property owner refused to believe that the jacks would reset a subsided house fair and square, Pryke bought it from him at a bargain price, jacked it up, and let it to his married son. "David has decorated it and not a crack has appeared anywhere. He's really got a house on the cheap."

At first, Pryke controlled all jacking operations visually, but this quickly proved inadequate when the subsidence affected more than two sides of a building. Pryke invented a device on which he can preset the amount of lift required on each jack. It consists of a tank of water with rubber pipes leading to glass tubes fixed to the house walls at each jacking point. Each man opens his jack till the water level reaches a predetermined mark on his glass tube.

Only once has the jacking system not worked to plan first time. The mishap occurred when Pryke attempted to lift a high buttressed wall of an old house. As his men screwed open their jacks, the buttress started to bow outwards, threatening to collapse. Pryke ordered his gang to reverse their jacks instantly. He found then that the buttress was jerry-built and hollow, and that the jacks had pushed their way between the buttress and the main wall.

Fordham Pryke is a self-taught engineer whose father was a builder. Born in November, 1899, he started his working life in marine insurance, then, in 1917, joined the merchant navy. "A few years later, I wanted to get married and that necessitated a shore job. I joined my father."

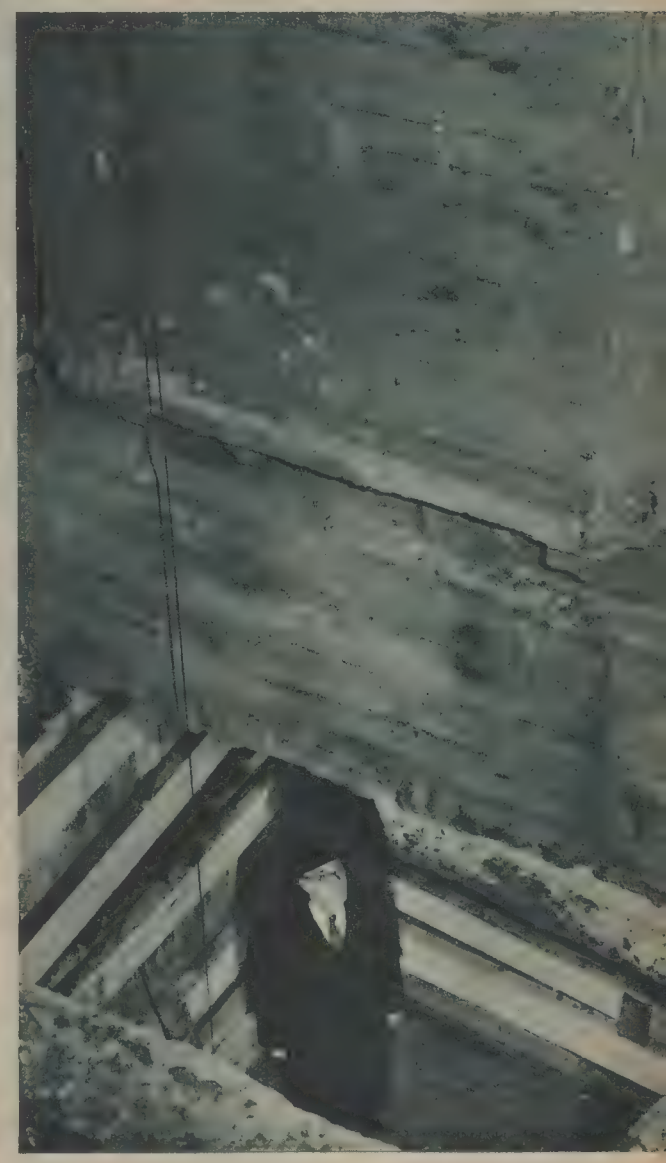
Pryke, senior, specialized to some extent in underpinning subsided buildings in the conventional way: by setting concrete slabs under the foundations. "I always knew," says Fordham Pryke, "that the method was technically poor and too costly."

Pryke discovered his improved system of underpinning before the war, but he did not have the opportunity to perfect and patent it until 1946. That year, with his father and his brother, Stanley, he started Pynford Limited on a capital of £1,800. In 1948, after his father's death, he sold his share in the building firm to his brother and bought his brother's share in Pynford Limited.

Since then, Pynford concrete stools have carried buildings of every shape and size all over Britain, including the massive Imperial Institute in Kensington.

Pryke, whose two sons are now his co-directors, says: "There is no building we could not lift or straighten. I hear that the leaning tower of Pisa is reaching a dangerous angle. The authorities at Pisa should know that we could straighten it for them in no time at all. If they wished, we could also set it at an angle every summer to satisfy tourists." THE END

When more than two sides of a building are affected by soil subsidence, the work is helped by a water device which governs use of the jacks



Pryke inspects a concrete beam which he had put in to help support the Imperial Institute, Kensington, parts of which are 115 feet high

SAPPHIRES ON WEDNESDAY

by ***MALCOLM GAIR***

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

The last round was going to be a ruthless battle. It was no place for a girl like Audie . . . and Mark knew he could not win without her

A HIGH wall enclosed the villa. The place was shrouded in darkness. "You stay here," Mark Raeburn told Audie. "Madame Malatino may be trigger-happy by now. She may lean out of the window and blaze away, if the dogs bark. . . ."

Mark, a British private detective, was trying to clear himself of a murder charge that hung over him in America. Mme Malatino and her brother, Miro Ablondi, had framed him for the killing of their nephew, Tony Ablondi. But, after overpowering Miro, Mark escaped.

Helped by Audie Malatino, a rich American girl who had married into the Italian family, Mark tried to find the answer to the key question: Why had Miro shot his nephew?

Mark hoped to find evidence—perhaps a document that would furnish a motive for the murder—in Miro's Milan apartment. But the apartment had been ransacked and any papers there may have been were gone.

As far as Audie and Mark knew, Miro was still in the States—probably still in the cellar where Mark had left him. This, therefore, looked like the work of Mme Malatino. Hoping to catch up with her, they hurried to Tony's villa, which Miro rented, in the foothills of the Alps. . . .

Telling the anxious girl, "I'll be right back," Mark dropped quietly into the villa grounds. As he edged forward among the trees he saw that the darkness was broken by a faint glow—a dying bonfire. He sniffed, and caught the unmistakable smell of burning paper.

Then, suddenly, one of the villa dogs gave an uncertain, experimental bark, and the next instant pandemonium broke loose. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

Miro's Last Bullet

THERE were two dogs, but they sounded like twenty. One of them barked repeatedly, quickly, over and over again on the same loud, hard note; the other gave a vicious whine rising to a tearing staccato howl.

Mark had moved away like a shadow at the first noise, but after a moment the rattle of a chain told him that the dogs were secured, and he advanced cautiously again. At any moment he expected a challenge—or a bullet. The dogs were still barking and howling like devils when, at last, he heard voices. Whoever it was would, of course, turn the dogs loose.

Mark made for the wall and quickly scaled it. Audie was three yards away.

"Across the road——" He spoke in an urgent whisper. "Lie down and keep still."

Audie ran across the road by his side, jumped with him across a ditch and, as he sank down beside a boulder, doubled up beside him. He pulled her round, bringing her face and hands behind the rock.

Behind the wall the noise of the dogs had changed into hunting yelps, and Mark heard them moving in the undergrowth. Behind them also he could hear a man shouting in Italian, apparently urging them on.

In a few moments they had reached the other side of the wall, where they yelped and whimpered. There was a scrambling noise: the man must be getting up on the wall.

Mark tightened his fingers on Audie's arm and froze into complete immobility. He could just make out the wall, and, after a moment, a blur with a white spot which must be the man's face. There was a long moment, and then the blur disappeared. The voice could be heard muttering. Then it and the dogs moved away.

Audie put her lips to his ear. "The caretaker," she whispered.

They waited again. The dogs, still giving an occasional whimper, were moving back to the house. Mark rose and helped Audie to her feet.

"Back to the car," he said, and they picked their way along the edge of the road. "Your aunt has burned the papers." He felt free to talk in a slightly louder whisper.

"Then—then it's all been for nothing?" Audie sounded horribly upset, almost on the verge of tears.

"I don't know. We're not through yet. You go back to the car."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing dangerous. Nothing you could help with. Go on."

Mark set off now outside the wall, down towards the lighted window he had noticed earlier as he approached the house. He moved cautiously, and it was twenty minutes before he arrived opposite it. It was, he saw, curtained, but there appeared to be a gap in the curtains.

He looked round as well as he could in the darkness until he found a large oak tree, then swung smoothly upwards. It did not take him long to reach a height at which he could look in at the window.

Standing upright, he began to edge out along a branch, guiding himself with another at chest level. Both branches got thinner, and the lower one bent under him, but the room was now coming into view, and he went on. Soon he was able to see a kind of broad path across the middle of the room. It took him a minute to focus what he saw.

It was a bedroom, and Mme Malatino lay on the bed, fully dressed and apparently deeply asleep. Mark could not clearly see her face or her feet, but there was no mistaking the full, black-clad body.

Her breathing was slow and regular. It must be barely ten minutes since the dogs had stopped barking. She could hardly have fallen so deeply asleep in that time. But it was still less credible that she had slept through the alarm . . . unless she were either drunk or drugged.

Mark slid down the tree and made his way back to the car, where Audie was waiting.

"Audie," he asked, "does your aunt either drink or take drugs?"

"I don't know," Audie said. "I'm sure she doesn't take drugs—but I've sometimes thought she was hitting the brandy for a day or two."

"That would fit," Mark said. He described what he had seen.

"Then what do we do now?" Audie asked.

"Get some sleep. There's nothing else we can do at the moment. The question is, where?"

"There's the bathing club," Audie said. "It's on the other side of the lake, almost opposite here."

Mark pressed the starter. "Good," he said. "We'll go there. . . ."

When Mark awoke, it was half-past six. There

Continued on page 43

They ran down the steep, scrub-covered slope until Mark's torch picked out the Mercédès—a battered wreck. . . . He knew two people should be inside

My gamble to make soccer history

by MATT BUSBY

It is sixty years since a team won the football double. Now Manchester United's manager has a plan to do it this season

Aston Villa, in 1897, were the last team to win the F.A. Cup and League championship. Since then, many sides have tried—and often failed in both

Busby, a former international, gives a tip the side is twenty-two. Busby told his

JUST over a year ago, the charwoman who dusts the boardroom at Old Trafford was wondering how she could find space for football's two most coveted trophies on the same shelf. Manchester United, who were well on the way to the First Division championship, had drawn Second Division opponents in the third round of the F.A. Cup. The so-called "Busby Babes" seemed all set for a triumphant march to Wembley, in addition to taking the League honours.

But I was far from confident as I sat in my office that December morning and heard that United would be playing away to Bristol Rovers. I wondered if my young team, performing so well in the routine run of League soccer, was experienced enough to cope with the brittle tension of a cup-tie—on a strange ground, in a different tempo of football.

A few weeks later, at Bristol, I saw the Rovers take command from the first minute. Again and again they attacked, so that United were fortunate to lose by only four goals. The Cup and League "double," never secured this century, was not to be for at least another year.

Watching my boys file slowly off the pitch, at the end, I knew just how they felt. When you are heading for glory, the cheers ring in your ears; when you slip up, the applause is for your opponents, and it echoes in your stomach. It was that way on Easter Monday, 1934, when I left the field at Blackburn with my defeated Manchester City team-mates. We had lost a match that we should have won. That set-back began a losing run which cost the City the First Division title, although we won the Cup.

Not since Aston Villa's success in 1897 has a club played with the sturdy consistency and inspired brilliance required to win the League *and* the Cup. Yet I believe that the Cup and League can be won in one season—and that Manchester United is the club most likely to do it. Since we want to win every match we play, there need be no secret that we are out for the double this season.

Fifteen days before Christmas, I switched on the radio for the Cup draw and heard that we were to meet Hartlepools United. A strong Third Division side playing on its own ground can be formidable opposition, but my lads are now as well equipped for Cup-tie football as its great uncertainties ever allow. Over the past twelve months our players have certainly learned how to overcome big-match nerves.

Many people cannot understand why teams should find a Cup match any different from the usual Saturday League game. Well, in theory, an athlete should stick to his natural style whether sprinting along a stadium track or along the edge of a cliff. But the trouble is that while a runner never worries unduly about stumbling in a track race, he would be very much aware of the dreadful consequences of slipping during a sprint along the cliff edge. That's the difference between League and Cup football.

Manchester United, however, are less likely than most teams to suffer from giddiness during 1957's race along the Cup-tie cliffs. Throughout our long unbeaten League runs at the end of last season and the beginning of this, we have played with that added zest usually reserved for the Cup competition. Every team we met tried to be the first to shatter our record. It was an intensive course in "big occasion" experience. I felt that the Old Trafford youngsters had graduated when, under the Dortmund floodlights and against the non-stop roar of a wildly excited German crowd last November, they withstood a tremendous battering to win through into the next round of the European Cup.

But temperament alone cannot bring about the double. There are many other factors involved. West Bromwich Albion's very near miss in 1953-54 illustrates two more hazards. They went into the semi-final firm favourites to beat Third Division Port Vale, and with a clear lead at the top of the First Division table.

The Albion won their way to Wembley, but injuries and international appearances forced them to play many reserves in vital League games. Eventually, they did well to win the Cup and hold on to second place in the League.

Injuries and international calls in the crucial closing weeks of the season are big worries to a manager with his eyes on the Cup and League. Nine of my regular first team players are current choices for representative games. But the absence for any reason of an established Old Trafford star does not mean disaster.

We have two complete teams of First Division class and experience. We even have fully

to some of his players. Average age of talent scouts: "Watch the schoolboys"

clubs have their own pet schemes of play, no one has yet suggested that Manchester United operate on the field to a mysterious Busby Plan. That is because we do not have any elaborate, prearranged manoeuvres. United players are expected to have the ball control to bring off the moves they start, and to use their own sense of responsibility in deciding which move to make.

With an average age of twenty-two, Manchester United can face the Cup and League marathon with an abundance of youthful stamina. Our high standard of fitness is largely due to players keeping up the hard physical training of their schooldays.

To help them we developed our own soccer night school at the Cliff ground, Salford. During the daytime our youngest players learn a trade to safeguard their future outside football. Mark Jones, for example, is now a skilled builder as well as a First Division centre-half.

When he is old enough to become a full-time professional at Old Trafford, a youngster faces seven days of football a week. Sunday is set aside for treatment of damage sustained in the previous day's match. Monday brings a full session of trackwork, ball play, and physical training under the direction of Eric Evans, the English rugger international. Tuesday is devoted to a trial game designed to iron out any faults that the team may be developing. More trackwork, P.T. and a six-a-side match is the usual programme for Wednesday. Thursday's trackwork is devoted to sharpening-up sprints, followed by a game of head tennis. Friday morning is taken up by loosening-up exercises, and more sprinting. I believe that the man never caught in possession never gets hurt.

That training schedule has achieved dramatic results physically—David Pegg, who joined us as a frail youth, has become quite an athletic figure, five feet ten inches tall, eleven stone seven pounds in weight, and strong enough on the ball to be in the running for an England "cap."

In turn, such fitness has brought about the football results which have kept Manchester United at the top of the table for so long. We know that we shall not miss the double for the same reason as that great Manchester United side of 1948. Their Cup run was matched by successes in the League, but these came too late in the season. When the Cup-ties began in 1948, United were fifth from the bottom; this year we are in a much stronger position.

Fortune has been kind since I took the biggest gamble of my life in 1953. Only eighteen months before, we had won the First Division title with what was a halfway team between the star-studded side of the immediate postwar years and the youngsters of today. But the championship was followed by a slide which took us to the foot of the table.

It was then that I decided to concentrate on youth. We might well have dropped into the Second Division, and the football world could have talked about the "Busby Blunders" instead of the "Busby Babes." But the gamble came off, and the young men of Manchester United are now in the running for the European Cup, as well as English football's double.

Do we play too much football? Won't even the fittest footballers become stale through an overcrowded fixture list? I don't think so. A winning team cannot win too often. And we do not worry about fixture lists at Old Trafford. A footballer with his mind on next month's matches is heading for the injured list. When a team shows that it is a twentieth-century possibility to win the Cup and the League, I am sure it will become a regular feature of modern football achievement.

In hoping that Manchester United will lead the way, I am fully aware that an unexpected bounce of the ball on Saturday can shatter my dream—for this season, anyway. And if that does happen, I am old enough and my players are young enough to reflect that there is always next season.

THE END

capable reserves for each of our reserves. With all this talk of the Cup and League double, many people overlook the fact that Manchester United last year accomplished a remarkable "treble." In addition to winning the First Division title, we took the Central League championship, and our under-eighteen team won the F.A.'s Youth Cup for the fourth successive year.

Our youth policy has not been a freak sequence of sheer good fortune. Our present position in football is built on foundations laid immediately after my arrival at Old Trafford in 1945. Then we adopted the policy which was to make Manchester United's talent scouts the lonely men of soccer. "Lonely" because I told them to keep away from the Third Division and minor league matches, which had traditionally attracted the scouts.

"Find the promising footballers before they get that far," was my instruction. "Go and watch the schoolboys." Since then we have studied the play of thousands of boys, given trials to many hundreds, and made about forty first-rate discoveries. When Duncan Edwards was invited to join our ground staff we already had a complete dossier on his soccer skill and background. Unknown to Edwards, he had been watched throughout twenty matches in and around his native Dudley. Even his performance in a public park kick-around had been noted.

Having decided that a youth has natural talent, we develop his own individual style instead of trying to mould him into a general pattern. I am pleased to see that while many

Manchester United's players keep a high standard of fitness. Bert Whalley gives members of the young side exercises in the gymnasium. Players also go to school to learn another trade

STONE'S
ORIGINAL
GINGER WINE

Rhymes with reason

My first is in RUM
wherein ginger excels.
It's a warm way of bringing
guests out of their shells.
RUM & STONE'S GINGER
½ Rum plus ½ Stone's

My second's in WHISKY—
you're on the right track,
with a gingered-up whisky
you've got Whisky Mac.
WHISKY MAC
½ Whisky plus ½ Stone's

My third plays the host
on its excellent own.
There's a host of good reasons
for bottles of Stone's.
STONE'S ON ITS OWN
stands alone

SIP IT! DRINK IT! DRAIN IT!

Enjoy also Stone's Orange Wine and Stone's Rich Raisin Wine.

Indigestion

Don't let it get on your nerves

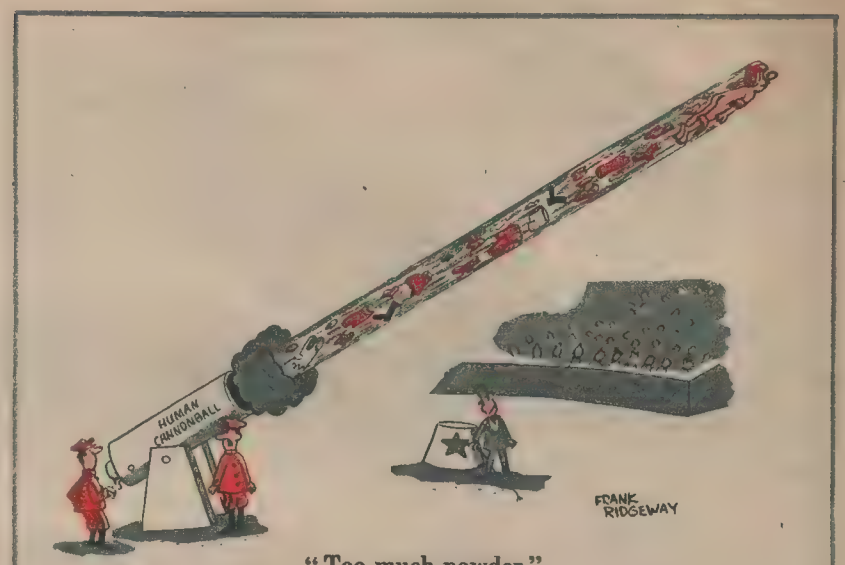
Get it off your chest with Rennies

DON'T LET indigestion worry you—stop the pain and stop the mental depression it brings, with Rennies. This is the indigestion tablet that suits the vast majority of cases.

You get quick relief with Rennies because from the moment you start sucking a Rennie tablet the antacids begin to work. They are carried to the stomach naturally in your own saliva, and when the pain-causing acids have been neutralised, the Rennie ingredients go on working until normal digestion is restored. Rennies cost 2/9d., 1/7d. and 10d.

RENNIES

More people get relief with Rennies than with any other indigestion tablet



"Too much powder"

The Philby treasure

Continued from page 9

your treasure can be displayed in all its beauty. It should properly stand on an ebony base. I shall send you one—of a later period, but it will serve. And you will please, Mrs. Philby, take out of the cabinet those horrible cups and saucers and all the other rubbish.

"Now I must be going. Goodbye, Mrs. Philby. Guard your treasure well. Look at it each day, with the new eyes that I have given you, and it will uplift your heart."

Margie was left in such a daze that, as she put it, she didn't know whether she was coming or going. She could hardly wait for Bob to get back from work or for Robert to come home from school. She felt as though she had drunk a whole magnum of champagne. After she had told her astounding news, all three of the Philbys behaved as though they were drunk. They capered about the kitchen holding hands. "We're rich!" they crowed. "We're rich!"

When they had sobered down a bit, they went into the living-room and stared reverently at the white vase. Noticing the pipe cleaners lying where

SCANDAL—1

Love and scandal are the best sweeteners of tea.

Henry Fielding

Margie had dropped them on the floor, Bob blushed with shame. He felt as if he had been committing a sacrilege.

"I can't believe it," he kept saying. "I simply can't believe it. All these years this thing has been kicking around the house and none of us ever gave it a thought. Now it turns out to be practically priceless."

Robert said in a hushed voice, his small hand clutching Margie's large one. "Tell again about Mr. Weissberg, what he said about giving us new eyes to see it with." Margie told it. It was certainly true that the vase seemed to have taken on qualities that none of them had seen before.

"It really is rather wonderful," Margie sighed. "I can't think why I never noticed what a heavenly shape it is."

"Can I hold it up to the light and see the pattern?" Robert asked.

"For goodness sake, *no*, love! Nobody must touch it. I'll never dare dust it again as long as I live."

Robert was silent for a while. Then he said: "Mr. Weissberg shouldn't have said that about Grandma's cups being horrible."

"Oh, I don't know," Margie allowed. "Perhaps he's right. They do look a bit—well, sort of common, alongside our vase." Her new eyes were already functioning. . . .

News of the Philby treasure spread like wildfire through their intimate circle and beyond it. Bob's colleagues at the factory discussed it endlessly.

Finally one of the directors, an amateur collector and antiquarian, sent for him to ask if the rumour he had heard were true. Bob said it was, and Mr. Bolshover remarked with a twinkle: "I always knew the cultural standard of our office staff was high, but it is nice to think we have a cashier who keeps his pipe cleaners in a Ming vase."

"*Kept*, sir. I don't do so any more." Bob grinned. "I'm scared to death to go near it."

Young Robert announced with impressive effect in class, after one of the teachers had explained the uses of china clay: "We have a piece of china at home that's *hundreds* of years old and worth *thousands* of pounds."

"Oh, come now. Things like that are only in museums."

"You can come and see it, if you don't believe me."

Many people did so, crowding into the small sitting-room to peer with awe through the glass door of the cabinet. In the meantime Margie was still searching for the key that belonged to it. She knew it was about the house somewhere, so she did not hurry to get another one made.

But she had obeyed instructions and lined the interior with strips of black velvet cut from an old evening frock. And Mr. Weissberg had been as good as his word. He had sent, with his compliments, the carved ebony pedestal on which the vase now stood.

So now the effect was complete. Solitary against its sombre background the Ming vase seemed to glow with unearthly purity and lustre. It invested the whole room with a kind of splendour. Robert formed the habit of popping in to have a look each day as soon as he got home from school, to make sure it was still there.

He still begged from time to time: "If I'm very, *very* careful, can I just *once* hold it up to see the pattern?"

"Better not, love," Margie told him. "You'd never forgive yourself if you had an accident, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't, Mummy. I think I'd—well, I'd just about *die*."

In the early evenings before Robert went up to bed the Philbys played their delightful new game of spending the proceeds of the sale of their treasure. The game was based on the premise that Robert would win a university scholarship, which would leave the greater part of the money free for other purposes.

"We could buy a house in the country," Bob would begin. "And we could have a car——"

"And I could learn to drive it and take you to and from the station," Margie would continue.

"I could drive it, too." This was Robert, squirming with excitement on Margie's knee. "I'll be old enough then, you see. Can it be a *red* one, a sports model with a huge long bonnet tied with straps?"

"Well, I don't know about a sports model, son. We'll need plenty of

room at the back for our two Great Danes and Mummy's Scottie."

"We could have a trailer."

"From my knowledge of Great Danes they'd hate sitting in a trailer. Much too undignified."

There was a pause for reflection. Then Robert, graciously giving way, said: "All right, I don't really mind. It can be a station wagon. Can it be a red one?"

"I don't see why not. A red station wagon would be very smart. You don't see many about of that colour."

The game always ended up in the orchard. Robert would say: "Tell about the apple trees, Mum." And Margie, her arms tight about the small body, would take up her cue.

"There'll be ten of them, all very big and old and gnarled. They'll bear crops of huge red apples that we'll store for the winter. And they'll be lovely for climbing on. And one of them will have a swing fixed on a bough——"

"And a little tree-house perched up high near the top where I can hide when you're looking for me——"

"That's right. You'll hear me calling, 'Robert! Robert! Drat the boy, wherever can he be?' And all the time you'll be up in the tree-house, laughing like anything."

ANOTHER pause for thought followed. Then, regretfully, Robert said: "No, I shan't, you know. I'll be grown up then and too big to get in it. Well, p'raps I shan't grow so awfully big."

"You'll be as big as Daddy if you drink your milk and toddle up to bed at the proper time. Off you go now, like a good boy. One, two, three——"

Robert, an obedient child, would slip off Margie's lap, usually at the second bidding. Sometimes he would pause at the door and ask wistfully: "Couldn't we sell the vase now and have the house and the dogs and the apple trees, instead of waiting till I'm grown up?"

"No fear, my love. We have to wait and see whether you get that scholarship. If you don't, it'll take all the money from the vase to send you up to Oxford."

"Oh yes, I forgot that. Well, don't you worry, Mummy. I'll get it. . . ."

It went on like this for several weeks. Then it ended, without warning, with appalling finality. . . .

Margie had gone to get her hair permed. Her appointment was for two o'clock. Knowing she would not be back before Robert got home from school, she had left the back door unlocked and the tea things laid ready in the kitchen. She emerged from the hairdresser's shortly before five, with her hair set tight and neat, and caught a bus straight home.

She knew, she said afterwards, directly she set foot in the house that something frightful had happened. She had a prescience of disaster born partly of her own sixth sense and partly of the unaccustomed silence that greeted her. Robert was not in the kitchen playing with his chemistry set or singing to himself in his shrill alto.

He was in the living-room. He was standing by the open china cabinet, stock still, as though he had been

WINNER OF COVER CONTEST NO. 11

MR. A. BURTON, of 34 Clarke Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, has won £100 in JOHN BULL's cover contest No. 11. His title for Heseltine's painting of the couple making a fairy dress for their daughter (December 1) is: SLAVES TO THE PARTY MACHINE.

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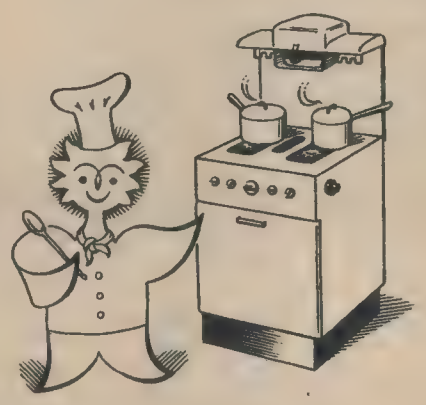

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frozen. His eyes, in the petrified, blanched face, looked unfocused and almost black. She knew, without looking down, that the Ming vase lay near his feet, shattered into fragments.

His lips moved, but at first no sound came from them. Then at last came a barely audible whisper: "I was just—to see the pattern. The rug slipped——"

The blood had drained out of Margie's face and her heart seemed to have stopped beating, but from somewhere in the depths of her being she found a reserve of self-control. The scream rising in her throat was given no outlet. Her gaze, though it now took in the evidence of the tragedy, ignored it and stayed unwavering on the blind, shocked face confronting her.

She was thinking: *What am I to say? What am I to do?*

She was not a clever woman and she knew little of child psychology. But she was not stupid, and she had a perspective denied to those with richer imagination. Though she could not have put it into words, she was able to measure the worth of one of the world's great works of art beside the price of an hour of human happiness.

And there was more than an hour at stake here. Not only inanimate things are subject to irreparable damage. Her mind leaped forward, years and years ahead, to the possible effect of present tears and reproaches on an abnormally sensitive unformed intellect. She felt, as if it had been her own, the agony of grief, the guilt past all atonement that turns inward upon itself, eating deeper and deeper into the secret places of the heart.

She prayed wildly to a deity she had never before invoked. "Oh God, help me, help me."

And at once the words came. They came from somewhere outside and beyond herself, without conscious thought or volition. She listened to them as she spoke them, as if they came from a stranger. Yet the voice that uttered them sounded exactly like her own; loud, warm and cheerful.

"Never mind, love, there's no need to get in a state over it. You were very naughty to break the vase after promising not to touch it, but it doesn't really matter because, you see, it's not really valuable. We didn't want to tell you this because we knew you'd be so upset, but Mr. Weissberg came back last week to have another look at it and found he'd made a mistake. Even an expert can make a mistake, he said, and that's what happened the first time. He had the wrong glasses on, or something."

SHE went over to the fireplace, picked up the hearth brush and coal shovel, knelt down and swept up the strewn fragments on the floor by the cabinet. She strolled out to the kitchen and dropped them, with a careless clatter, into the garbage pail. Then she sauntered back again. And all the time, as she kept up the flow of talk, she was watching her son's face out of the tail of her eye.

"It was a fake, Mr. Weissberg said. You know what a fake is, don't you, after reading all those books about old china? It's a copy, ever so cleverly done so that it looks like a real antique. There are people who make their living that way. Our poor old white vase wasn't worth five shillings, let alone thousands of pounds.

"I don't deny that Daddy and I were awfully disappointed. But, as you see, there's no need to grieve about it. We've had heaps of fun planning how we'd spend the money when we got it—and nobody can take that away from us. And there's another good thing. We'll be able to get rid of the china cabinet now and buy that lovely settee."

Slowly, slowly the stricken face relaxed. Colour crept back over the cheekbones. The dilated eyes lost their dreadful stare. She went to him and put an arm round his shoulders and gently propelled him out of the room.

"Now then," she said, "what would you like for your tea. . . ?"

It was not long after this that the note came from Mr. Weissberg. It said:

> "I have had the good fortune to acquire an ebony plinth of the correct period for your vase. The other, you understand, was only a makeshift. I will be passing your house within the next few days, on my way to value a collection in Hampshire, and will call in, if it will not inconvenience you, so that we can make the exchange."

During the intervening period all the Philbys had kept quiet about the disaster. Margie and Bob were preoccupied with trying to conceal their private distress from Robert, while Robert himself was silent for equally personal, though different, reasons.

To have revealed at school that the much-vaunted Philby treasure had turned out to be a worthless fake would have entailed most serious loss of face.

So the whole incident was suppressed and, when visitors asked to see the famous vase, they were told that it had been lodged in the strong room at the bank for greater safety. The Philbys themselves never mentioned it again. The china cabinet had been sent to an auction and a comfortable sofa installed in its place. At supper time, when the three of them had been used to play their "living in the country" game, they chattered loudly on other subjects.

They had clean forgotten about Mr. Weissberg, so that when the note came, it threw Margie into a minor panic.

"How on earth are we to tell him? He'll be most frightfully upset."

"If we can bear it, he can," Bob said bitterly. "Damn it, it's our loss."

"You don't understand," Margie said. "It isn't the cash value of the thing. It's—oh, never mind. But what am I to do about *this*? I can't just ignore it. I'll have to tell him something."

"Then tell him the truth."

So Margie wrote on the back of a postcard:

> Dear Mr. Weissberg,
>
> Thanks all the same, but please don't trouble to come, as we haven't got the vase any more. There's been an accident.

Barely could Mr. Weissberg have received the message before he appeared in person, like a genie summoned by invocation.

It was no more than half-past nine the next morning. Margie was alone in the house, washing up the breakfast things in the kitchen. She ran out, wiping her hands on her apron, to answer the strident summons of the bell.

And there, on the doorstep, stood Mr. Weissberg, holding her postcard. Gone was his bland and gentle dignity. He looked, she said afterwards, like someone who had just had a tragic bereavement.

"What's this? What is the meaning?" He strode past her into the living-room. "Tell me at once."

Margie complied. But, aware of the need for circumspection, she told only the bare bones of the thing—about coming home to find Robert standing over the shining fragments, his pitiful explanation of how it happened.

"Aie——" he wailed, "what does it concern us, the how and wherefore? That it should happen is enough."

Mr. Weissberg sank into a chair. His head hung down and swung from side to side, and again there came from him the curious wailing sound. "Aie, aie, there was not such another in Europe. I should have taken it away. I should not have trusted you——"

He looked up, and Margie saw that there were tears in his eyes. At once her own began to brim in sympathy and they sat there facing each other, an incongruous couple, helplessly crying.

It was the first time Margie had given way to her feelings. She had had to keep a tight rein on them because of Robert and Bob. But the grief, the crushing sense of loss, were none the less real for being suppressed.

It all poured out between gulps, their hopes and plans for Robert's future, for the house with the apple trees, the car with the Great Danes—all lost, destroyed in a single calamitous instant.

"It's all very well to say what you never have you never miss," Margie ended. "But it's not true. When we played our game, it was as though the house was already there, somewhere in the future, waiting for us. Now there's nothing. Nothing to look forward to. All gone."

"Gone," Mr. Weissberg echoed. "For you, a fortune. For the world—such beauty. *Du lieber Gott*, and all through a child's naughtiness! It is no consolation even that you beat him——"

"Beat him?" Margie's head jerked up. "Beat my Robert? He's never had a hand laid on him in his life."

"How then did you punish him?"

"I didn't."

"You cannot mean this—it is unbelievable. This child's disobedience has cost you a great sum of money and deprived the world of a masterpiece which can never be replaced, yet you exact no penalty from him——"

"Mr. Weissberg," Margie broke in, "he doesn't know what he destroyed. He thinks the vase was only an imitation—a fake."

"What nonsense is this? Who told him such a thing?"

"I did. I said the mistake was yours in the first instance, and that you had admitted it."

And so, at last, the whole of it was out—her terror at the sight of Robert's face, her frantic prayer and the words that had sprung to her lips in response.

"Something helped me," she finished. "I don't know what it was, but something seemed to be saying the words for me."

"What do you mean, 'time I took it off'? I wore this hat *coming*"

MR. WEISSBERG had not interrupted, but he had been staring at her with an increasingly odd expression. And suddenly she realized that he was angry. He was very angry.

"So," he said, "you cheat. You tell this monstrous lie in order to spare your son from suffering either physically or morally for his misdeed. And you appear to think you were inspired to do this. Mrs. Philby, can you think it right that even a child should escape not only the penalty but all responsibility for the harm he has done?"

"He's not an ordinary child——"

"Poof! So says every mother. Mrs. Philby, you have acted wrongly in protecting your son in this way. He should be told the truth. If he were here now I would consider it my duty to tell him myself."

Margie jumped up. Her face flamed and she was trembling all over.

"If you ever dare to do such a thing, so help me, I'll throttle you with these two hands. He's not to be told—do you hear me? Never, never! It would break his heart. What do I care about any old Chinese pot? If I had the money I could buy another one, or nearly as good, anyway. There's only one treasure no money could buy—and that's the one I've got, and it's a living, breathing one, not made of clay.

"I wish you'd never come here. I wish you'd left us in our ignorance. We were happy enough before, and we'll be happy again—as well here as anywhere else—so long as we're together. If you imagine the world's come to an end for the Philbys just because their castles in the air have tumbled down, you're very much mistaken."

Mr. Weissberg sat mute and motionless under this tirade. When Margie stopped for lack of breath, he rose very slowly from the chair and went to the window. He seemed somehow to have shrunk in height, to look older and yellower. Standing with his back to Margie, looking on to the wide and busy thoroughfare, he pulled out a large and spotless white silk handkerchief and dabbed his face with it.

The noise of the traffic was a muffled roar; but inside the room there was no sound louder than the ticking of the clock.

Mr. Weissberg remained at the window for what seemed to Margie an age. At last he said, without turning round: "I beg your pardon. It was not easy for me to understand at first. I have no son, you see. Perhaps for this reason I have lavished too much love on things that are not of flesh and blood.

"I think now that you were right and I was wrong. I believe some good angel put those words into your mouth, and I promise that your secret will be safe with me for as long as I live."

THE END

Duel in the deep

Continued from page 14

the still, green water. In the after end of the hold, Needles and the other crew boy had begun to work the pump.

Peg came and stood beside Jack. "Do you think he'll do his job properly, after last night?"

Jack shrugged. "Diving is one job where the boss never knows what the worker is doing. All we can do is hope."

Peg was looking unhappy. She said: "I'd hate to have come all this way to have the whole thing ruined by a no-good like Sattain."

"That was the risk you took when you took him on," Jack said. He turned and saw that Wally was staring across the waters towards the high cliffs in the south.

"What's the matter, Wally?" Jack said. He tried to sound friendly. "Something on your mind?"

Wally started. He was a tall, handsome boy and a cheerful character to have aboard; except that right now he looked more frightened than cheerful.

"No, boss," Wally answered Jack's question. "Nothing wrong."

Jack knew there was no point in pressing the matter: the half-castes could be as uncommunicative as their aboriginal cousins.

SATTAIN came up at last, and the shell-bag in his hand was empty. Wally leaned over the side and took off the helmet. Then he removed the weights, and Needles and the other crew-boy helped Sattain up the ladder. Sattain sat down on a stool, gulping in the fresh morning air, ignoring Jack and the others completely.

"Well?" Peg said impatiently. "What's down there?"

Sattain looked up at her, his eyes flat and blank with the sunlight striking into them. He said: "Nothing. No shell for miles around."

"You're lying!" Peg quivered with rage, and Jack stepped close to her, thinking she was going to strike the brazenly rude Sattain. "Dad didn't make up that story. He found pearl here. Didn't he, Wally? Didn't my father find pearl here?"

Jack was watching the half-caste closely. Wally glanced towards the cliffs away to the south, then looked back at Peg. He said woodenly: "Dunno, miss. Boss Holgate had some pearl, but I ain't sure where he got it."

"Why aren't you sure?" Peg demanded. "You were with him all through that last trip. You're lying, too, Wally."

"Just a minute, Peg," Jack said quietly. "Wally, what's down there to the south? Is that where Boss Holgate was lost?"

Wally tried to turn away, but Jack grabbed his arm. Wally looked at him and said slowly: "Don't go down there, boss. There's spirits down there——"

"That's tribal talk," Jack said. "You aren't the sort of half-caste that's hung about with tribes, Wally. You're half white, remember. White men don't believe in spirits. What happened down there?"

"I dunno, boss." Wally's voice was high with fear. "Boss Holgate was down on the bottom, and all of a sudden he was gone. Just like that." He swept his hand through the air. "The line was out a long way, and the hose, too. When we dragged 'em in, they was both cut. Clean, like a knife had been through 'em."

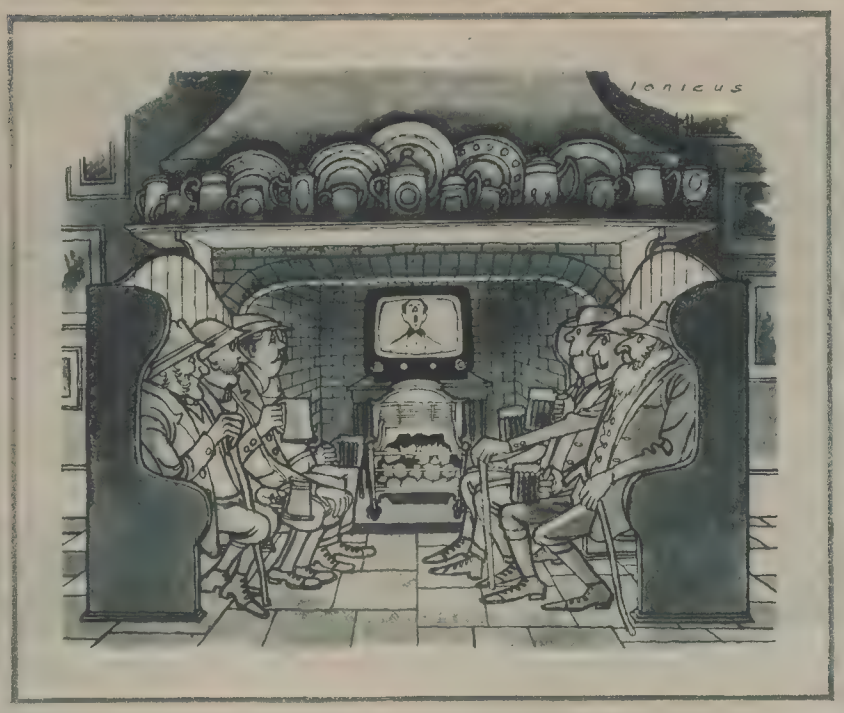
"Didn't you go looking for Boss Holgate?"

Wally hung his head. "I couldn't get the other boys to stay. I was scared myself, too. Down there, the place has got spooks, boss. I dunno what it is, but you can feel 'em."

Jack looked at the half-caste, aware of the fact that the superstitious black half of Wally was now in the ascendancy. Spirits, good and evil, were part of the way of life of the aborigine.

"We're going down there," Jack said, making up his mind. "We're going down there now. . . ."

As the lugger began to move across



the wide waters of the sound, Peg stood close to Jack. They went in under the sheer red cliffs, and the soft note of the engine beat back in a faint echo from the lonely walls. An eagle rose up from a crag and planed heavily down and round a cliff out of sight. It was the only sign of life at this end of the sound, and it had gone as silently as a dark ghost.

"Have you noticed?" Peg said to Jack. She kept her voice low so that she would not be heard by Wally and the crew-boys. "There hasn't been a stir in the water ever since we came in here. It's just as if there's nothing alive down there below the surface."

"You're not scared of the spirits, too, are you?" Jack said.

Peg didn't smile. "I've never laughed at anyone's beliefs, not even their superstitions."

Wally and the other crew-boys stood in a small, tight group, their fear plain on their faces as the lugger swung round the highest point of the cliffs. They came slowly round and at once all of them saw the high cliffs rising on the other side of them. "We're in another sound," Peg exclaimed.

"I don't think there is any sound," Jack said, and his voice, like Peg's, came back like a lost cry from the sheer walls on either side of them. "This"—he nodded towards the mass of red stone looming on their left—"is an island, I'll bet. We're heading out to sea."

Then the cliffs began to fall away from them. In another minute they saw the open sea ahead of them.

Jack shut off the engine and turned to Wally. "No spirits, see? Now drop the anchor and we'll go pearling."

Five minutes later, Sattain went over the side again and down into the gently heaving water. When he came up, his shell-bag was still empty.

"Nothing," he said. "Just like I expected."

Jack turned to look at Peg. The look of disappointment on her face went through him like a stab of the bends. He knew that she hadn't come all this way in search of a fortune; all she had wanted was to prove that her father, always the dreamer, had perhaps found his dream in the end. And now it looked as if Ned Holgate had died for nothing.

Abruptly, Jack said: "Wally, get me the spare suit."

Peg looked up. She said quickly: "What are you going to do?"

"I'll go down with Sattain," Jack said, and out of the corner of his eye he was aware of Sattain watching him. "I'll just make sure."

He went below, dragged on the spare woollens, wrapped the flannel round his waist, pulled on the long thick stockings and went back up on deck. Wally, still nervous, helped him drag on the stiff outer dress. Finally he lumbered across to the side. Sattain, already on the ladder, stared at Jack through the thick faceglass of his helmet. Then he threw himself backwards and disappeared in a scramble of bubbles.

"Watch him down there, Jack," Peg said.

Jack looked at her. He said: "Don't let's argue about him any more, Peg."

"I'm not arguing," she said softly. "I just don't want to lose you, too."

He stood beside her, hampered and awkward in the diving-suit, unable to take her in his arms, and knowing that this was the one moment in all the years when she wouldn't have protested. He leaned awkwardly towards her and kissed her lips. Then, aided by Wally, he swung over the side on to the ladder. He looked up at the half-caste and said: "You won't run out on me, Wally?"

Wally grinned weakly. "I won't run out, boss."

He screwed the faceglass into the helmet. Jack heard the air hissing into

SCANDAL—2

What is slander? A verdict of "Guilty" pronounced in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defence or appeal, by an interested and prejudiced judge.

Joseph Roux

the helmet, and waited for Wally's tap on the dome about his head. It came, and he went backwards down into the silent jungle of the sea.

He landed in sand and went down on his knees. He stood up, adjusting his air-valve, and looked about him. A school of Moorish idols floated past him, waving in the current like a black and white screen in a breeze, and a bright red sea-slug concertinaed its way across the sandy floor. Other fish went whirling away through the green mist, and in the distance he saw a long black shape that could have been a shark.

There was no sign of Sattain.

He turned right round. Behind him a bank of coral rose up like a wall of bright garden shrubs. The colour was vivid but cold: even the reds had a chill look about them. He moved towards the wall, stepping weightlessly through the spring-green sea grass, seeing a bright parrot fish watching him from behind a clump of brain coral.

And then he saw the pearl-oyster at the base of the wall. It was big, six or eight inches across, and there were more like it all along the foot of the wall. He gathered five shells, dropping them into the string bag at his wrist, then stood up and turned on his spit-cock tap. His face-glass had begun to mist, and he drew in a mouthful of water and spat it over the glass.

The glass cleared, and he saw Sattain. The quarter-caste was coming towards him along the wall, his knife cold and bright in the green light.

Jack stepped away from the wall, making sure his line and hose wouldn't be fouled on the coral, and fumbled at the screws that held his knife in its sheath. Sattain had found shell his first time down here and had had ideas of coming back here later and bringing it up for himself. He was going to kill Jack now, and the killing would accomplish a double purpose. It would keep the secret of the shell bed and avenge last night's humiliation.

Sattain came on, moving with a slow, heavy grace, like a figure in a dream. Jack backed still farther out into the open sea floor, his own knife now in his hand. He knew that if either he or Sattain drew blood, the sharks would be down on them like mad dogs and neither of them would get away.

Sattain would be going for his air-hose, and he would have to see that Sattain didn't get close enough to cut off his one tenuous connection with life up there on the surface.

Suddenly Sattain jerked on his line. Up on the lugger, Wally and the crew-boys, all unsuspecting that they were helping in murder, began to haul up the quarter-caste.

He left the sea bed slowly, arms moving almost in a gesture of farewell. Then he began to swing towards Jack's line and hose, the knife now held stiff and ready.

Frantically, Jack tugged on his line to be hauled up, but even as he did so he knew it was useless. Wally and the crew-boys could haul up only one man at a time, and they were hauling up Sattain.

Jack began to run along the sea floor, stumbling as fast as he could in his ponderous gear, dragging his line and hose away from the hovering figure above him. Then, abruptly, he was jerked backwards and he spun round on his knees, realizing with a cold stab of horror that he had run out his line and hose to their very limit.

He saw Sattain coming towards him, drifting on his line, and he moved fast. He cut the ropes that held the lead weights to his corselet. He closed his valve to inflate his suit. Then, as his suit began to balloon out over his body, he began to rise slowly off the sea bed. He looked up and saw Sattain bearing down on him.

The quarter-caste was going to take the risk of blood in the water.

Jack could feel his suit stiffening about him. It was as if his limbs had suddenly become paralysed. Desperately he tried to move his arm, to bring his knife up, but he might just as well have tried to turn somersaults. He floated up on his back, a massive, bloated target for the knife now no more than twenty feet away.

Then all at once the light above them was blotted out. Something huge and black came between them and the distant sun.

It came down, diamond-shaped and deadly. Sattain turned, but he was too late. The giant devil ray caught Sattain's lines between its horns, and then seemed to heave back. Jack saw Sattain shoot away from him, gone as if jerked by a giant hand, and a moment later there was a tremendous disturbance of water right above. The ray had surfaced, taking Sattain up with it, and Jack knew that the quarter-caste was already dead.

It could have been in this way that Ned Holgate had also died.

Slowly, his ears and head aching, his stomach still cold with the death that had touched him, he began to rise towards the lugger. . . .

Five minutes later he lay on the sun-baked deck, his head pillowed in Peg's lap.

"There's shell down there," he said. "I don't know about pearls, but there's enough shell down there to build a monument to your dad."

Peg kissed him, her tears falling on his still taut face. She said nothing, but she didn't need to. It was the first time in their lives that words had never been needed between them. THE END

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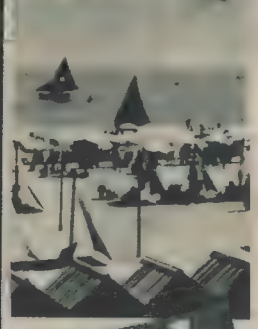

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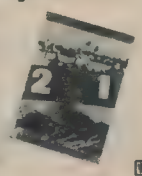

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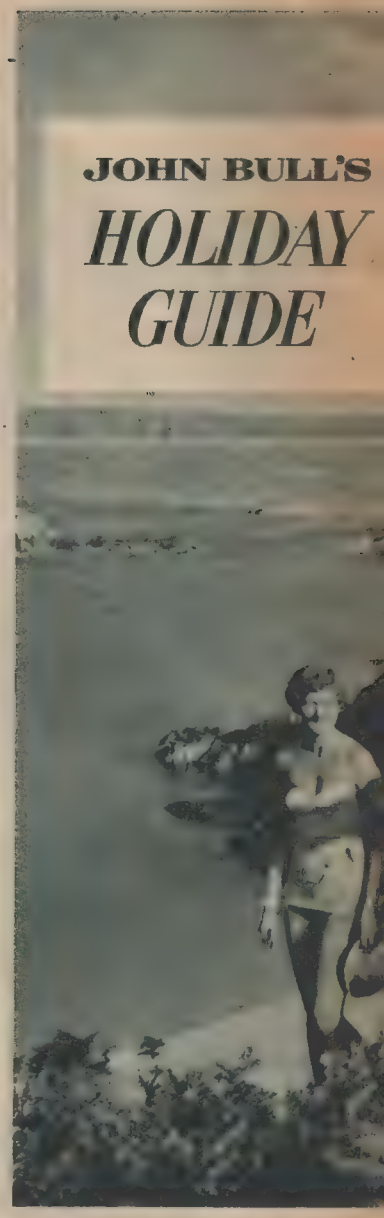

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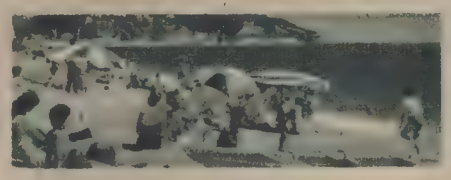

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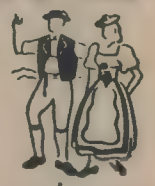

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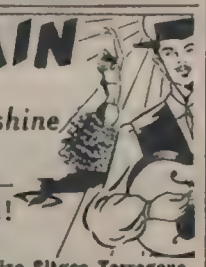

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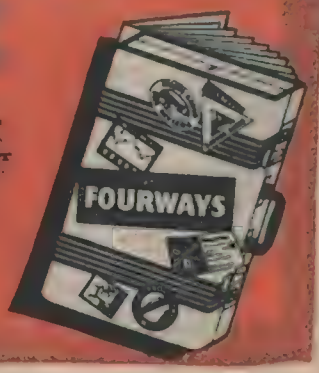

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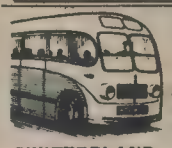

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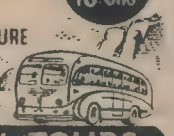

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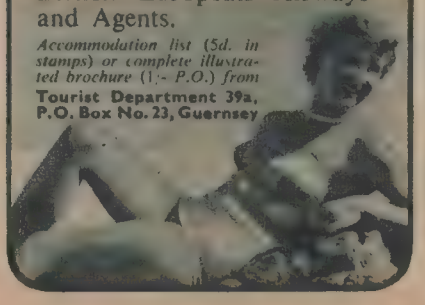

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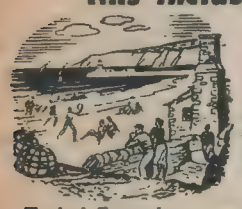

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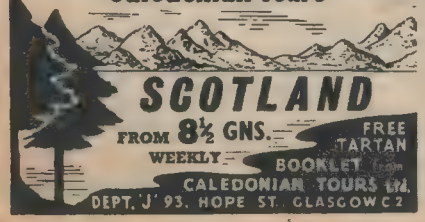

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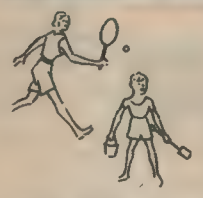

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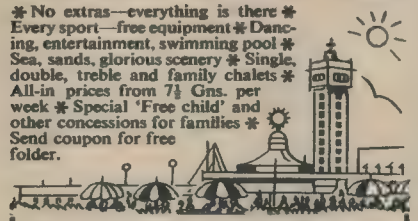

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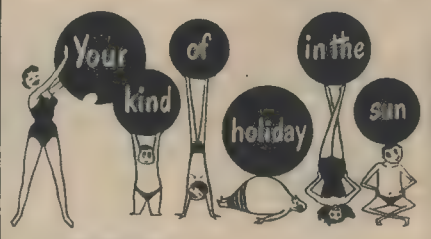

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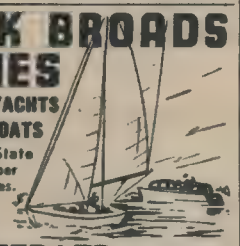

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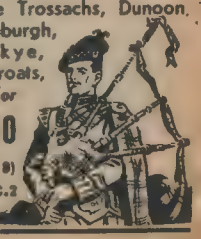

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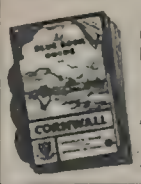

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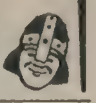

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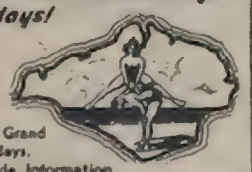

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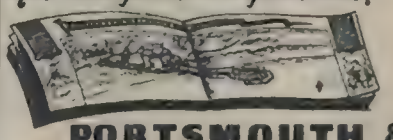

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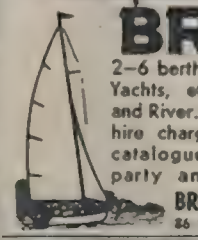

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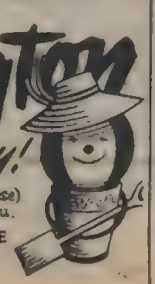

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The small woman

Continued from page 21

steaming grain into the basins as each child came up in turn for its helping. At the end of this serving there wasn't much left in the pot for her, and from that moment onwards that is the way things usually turned out.

The children revived after the meal, began to clamber about the rocks again, and made excited forays ahead, to lie in wait and ambush the main party.

She gave up trying to keep them in order, but as the afternoon progressed these minor expeditions became fewer and fewer, and soon she had four small ones hanging on to her coat, protesting that they were tired, and could they all go back to Yangcheng now? Gladys took it in turns with the older boys to carry them.

It was getting dark when they came to a mountain village she knew, and where she thought they might find shelter for the night.

Help came to them from an unexpected quarter. An old Buddhist priest, in his bright saffron robes, stood on the steps of his temple as the Pied Piper of Yangcheng and her brood straggled past.

"Where are you going?" he called to Gladys.

"We are refugees on the way to Sian," she said.

He came down the steps and approached her, his small eyes almost lost in the maze of wrinkles and lines that creased his face.

"But what are you going to do with all these children, woman?" He sounded most disapproving.

"I'm looking for a place for us to sleep tonight."

"Then you can stay in the temple," he said abruptly. "All my brother priests are away just now. There is plenty of room. Tell them to come in. It will be warmer than the mountainside."

The children needed no prompting. This was something like adventure! It was dark in the temple, and there were gloomy recesses in which stone figures of the fat, bland, heavy-lidded Buddha resided.

The children crowded round the iron pot when Gladys had finished cooking the millet, and when they had eaten they curled up on their bedding and went fast asleep.

She did not sleep so easily. For one thing, the temple was alive with rats, which twittered in the darkness and ran over the sleeping children; and a small, creeping doubt had entered her mind concerning the wisdom of starting this journey with so many small ones. Perhaps she was overestimating her own ability? It was one thing to journey through the mountains alone; quite another to take a hundred children with you.

The first day had been troublesome enough, yet all the children were fresh, and she was crossing country she knew intimately.

The older girls had not complained, but she could see that several of them had suffered already. They were completely unused to mountain walking; the feet of several of them had once been bound, and even many years free from the bindings was insufficient to turn them into healthy limbs able to withstand the drag and scrape of the rocky paths.

For perhaps an hour the big boys tried to keep off the rats, then they also became too tired to persevere, and fell asleep. The more Gladys thought about the future, the less she liked it, but there was no chance of retreat now; she had to go on.

The next day was a replica of the first. The children awoke refreshed, and, with a complete lack of reverence, began to explore the temple with shrill, admiring cries. The priest smiled urbanely; he did not seem to mind. He bowed when Gladys offered her thanks, and wished her a safe journey to Sian.

They were far from any village when the next night caught them, and they huddled together in the shelter of a semi-circle of rocks, out of the wind. In the night there was a heavy mist, and the children huddled under their wet quilts, and next day they steamed and dried out when the sun rose.

That afternoon they met a man on a mule travelling in the same direction as themselves. If they would come to his village, he said, he would be glad to find them shelter for the night. Gladys accepted his offer gratefully.

In his courtyard, the children spread themselves out and scooped cooked millet out of their bowls until their bellies were full, then drank cupful after cupful of hot twig tea: they still thought it was all a wonderful adventure.

Even Gladys felt an immense sense of relief with another day safely past, and the Yellow River one day closer. She cupped her bowl between her hands, embracing the tiny warmth it offered, and chatted to the older girls, who included Sualan and Ninepence.

"How many days will it take us to reach the Yellow River, Ai-weh-deh?" asked Sualan diffidently.

"The muleteers on the normal track used to take five days. We're going right through the mountains. About twelve, I'd say."

"And we shan't see a single Japanese soldier the whole way?" asked Ninepence.

"I hope not," she answered.

She looked at the two girls as they chatted, the girl she had bought for ninepence, and the slave girl from the *yamen*. They were both exquisite little creatures with clear pale skins and blue-black shining hair. Even in their dusty padded coats their prettiness was still unimpaired. She yawned. It was odd, this constant tiredness. "Probably the added responsibility of the children," she thought to herself, as she wrapped herself in her bedding quilt and lay down to sleep.

In the morning the two carriers of the millet had to return to Yangcheng. They had reached the limit of their province.

However, the man they had met in the mountains proved a good friend; he provided them with another coolie who would carry what was left of the millet until it was finished, and even by rationing it did not look as if that would last another two days.

The next two nights were spent in the open. Two of the older boys, Teh and Liang, had obtained a pot of whitewash from a village along the way, and they went on ahead daubing a splash of white on to the rocks to mark the trail across the mountains. Sometimes they would write a text across a rock: "This is the way. Walk ye in it!" or "Fear ye not, little flock!" There were squeals of appreciation as the messages were translated to the young ones.

This was new country to Gladys, but she knew they were heading south by the direction of the sun. They were thirsty practically all the time, for the sun was hot and wells were to be found only in the villages. After the heavy wet mountain mists each morning they would gather round any drip from the rocks and moisten their tongues.

The millet was used up now, and the carrier went back to his village. They had no more food and the mountains stretched ahead of them, wild and barren, with few places of habitation.

Often the slopes were so steep that Gladys and the older children had to form a human chain down the mountainside, and pass the younger children down from hand to hand. They cried when they fell down, and cried when they got tired. Often Gladys tried to rally them with a hymn and when they reached a level patch of ground they would all march bravely along singing the chorus.

Between them, the older children and Gladys were carrying practically all the bedding now, and often they would give one of the five- or six-year-olds a pick-a-back ride for a short distance. There was rarely any moment when a small hand was not clutching at Gladys's jacket.

Seven nights out from Yangcheng found them camped in the heart of a mountainous region unknown to her. They had found a small trail which led southwards.

It was not yet dark, but everyone was too exhausted to move farther. The thin, home-made cloth shoes, which nearly everyone wore, were practically all worn out. The big girls' feet were cut and bleeding.

Gladys raised her head to scan the party lying in huddled groups under the rocks. Unless they received food and help very soon, she was afraid of what might happen to them. Suddenly, she saw Teh and Liang, who were still acting as forward scouts, running back towards her. They were shouting something which she could not hear, but their obvious excitement presaged danger.

"Men!" they shouted. "Soldiers!"

Gladys put her whistle into her mouth to blow the prearranged signal for the children to scatter, but she did not blow it. If they scattered into this wild terrain they might all be lost and would starve or die in this great wilderness.

And then, as the boys stumbled towards her, she saw men in uniform rounding a buttress of rock down the valley, and with a gasping sigh of relief realized that they were Nationalist troops.

The children had sighted them also. Their tiredness fell away and they bounded over the rocks to greet the newcomers.

Gladys, with the girls, advanced more slowly, and, as she walked, suddenly heard the sound she dreaded more than any other. The noise of aircraft engines! With a thunder of sound that echoed throughout the valley, two Japanese fighters tore through a cleft in the mountains and hurtled across their heads.

She threw herself into the shelter of a rock, glimpsing from the corner of her eye that the girls were doing the same. She crouched, rigid, waiting for the rattle of machine-guns. None came. She looked up as the planes disappeared, catching sight of the stubby wings, the "Rising Sun" insignia painted on the fuselage. But the airmen were obviously intent on something more important than machine-gunning Nationalist troops or refugees in the mountains.

GLADYS stood up and looked down the valley. The children had been well trained in their drill in the event of attack by aircraft. They were scrambling up from their hiding places. The Nationalist troops, who had also scattered wildly, were mixed up with the children. They rose from the rocks, laughing together.

There were about fifty soldiers, reinforcements from Honan passing up country to join a Nationalist force farther north.

Gladys met the young officer in charge and explained their predicament, but the problem of the hungry children was being solved spontaneously. Soldiers were diving their hands into knapsacks, and bringing out treasures of sweet foods, and all round all she could hear were the "Ahs!" and "Oohs!" and "Ohs!" of the delighted children.

The soldiers decided to camp in that spot for the night. They invited Gladys and her brood to stay with them and share their food.

It was a feast! They had foodstuffs not seen in Shansi for years. The children sat round the small fires, stuffing themselves to bursting point. Even Gladys, for the first time on the journey, ate her fill. When the troops moved on at dawn the children waved them a sorrowful goodbye.

Each day now took on something of a nightmare complex. Strangely enough the young children bore up well. They were used to little food; at night, no matter how hard the ground, they slept to a point of complete insensibility; and they woke refreshed and ready to play and gambol next morning. They charged up the mountains, lost their bowls and chopsticks, cried and protested, but they all remained healthy.

Sualan, Ninepence and the other girls were in a pitiful state. The sun had cracked their lips and burned their faces. Their feet were blistered and sore, and they could only hobble a few hundred yards before they had to rest again.

Nevertheless, no one gave up, and they moved slowly onwards through the mountains. On the twelfth day they came out of the mountains and down through the foothills towards the Yellow River.

"Down below," Gladys said, "look over there, the village of Yuan Chu, and beyond it, far away, look, the Yellow River! See it shining in the sunshine!"

"But it is so far away, Ai-weh-deh. And we're so hungry."

"In the village of Yuan Chu they'll give us food, and then we'll arrive at the Yellow River. And when we cross that we'll all be safe. Now let's sing a song as we march down to the town."

They followed the road which led down from the foothills to the town. It had been badly bombed. Rubble littered the streets and most of the houses were roofless.

There was silence about the place as they approached. No dogs ran yapping to meet them. No carriers or coolies moved in the streets.

The children ran from house to house, their shrill voices echoing in the

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Terence

courtyards. There was no one there. It was deserted. Then Liang and Teh, the faithful scouts still ahead of the party, reported that they had found an old man.

Gladys hurried up to him. He was sitting against a tree in the sunshine, a cone-shaped straw hat on his head, a few white hairs straggling from his chin. His thin legs stuck out from the blue cotton trousers. He had been asleep and was querulous at being woken.

"Old man, this is Yuan Chu, is it not?" Gladys said loudly.

"Yes, this is Yuan Chu."

"But where are all the people. Why is the village deserted?"

"They've run away. The Japanese are coming and they've all run away. I'm too old to run. I'll sleep here in the sun until the Japanese arrive, and if they kill me, who will care?"

"But where have all the people gone?"

"Across the Yellow River, away from the Japanese."

"Then we must go there, too. Are there boats?"

"There were boats once. Now I think you are too late." He cocked a rheumy old eye at the children crowding round him. "Where are all these children from? Where are they going?"

"We are refugees journeying to Sian," she said.

His lip curled contemptuously as he looked at her. "You are a fool, woman, to bother with all these children. The gods intended a woman to care for a handful of children, not an army."

"How far is it to the river?"

"Three miles. Follow the road to the ferry, but you will not find a boat there. The Japanese are coming and the people will not leave their boats to be captured. Go back to the mountains, woman. They are the only safe places."

"We are going to Sian," she said simply. She blew her whistle and the children lined up around her. It was Chèia's turn to be carried so she humped him on her back.

"As soon as we get to the river we shall bathe and wash our clothes," she said. "And we shall catch a boat and be safe on the other side. Goodbye, old man, and good luck!"

He did not turn his head to watch them go. He let it slump forward on his chest; he was asleep before they had turned the corner.

They trudged down the dusty path to the river edge. There were reeds along the bank, and little bays edged with sand where the children could splash and paddle in the shallows. They ran towards it, shouting and excited.

The river was hundreds of yards wide, running swift and deep in the centre. But there were no boats, and no sign of any boats.

Sualan said quietly, "Where are the boats, Ai-weh-deh?"

"They must come across every now and then," she answered. "Perhaps we're too late today. We'll spend the night here on the river bank, so we'll be ready to go aboard the boat first thing tomorrow morning."

They huddled together in a hollow on the bank.

A YELLOW moon rose above the Yellow River. It was quiet and peaceful, but Gladys Aylward was much afraid. Where were the boats? Why were there no boats? Was the old man right? Had everyone fled across the river to avoid the Japanese? Were they trapped against this broad ribbon of water?

When she woke next morning the children were already playing in the shallows. The youngest were calling back, shouting: "Ai-weh-deh, we are hungry. When shall we have something to eat, Ai-weh-deh?"

"Soon!" she called. "Soon!"

She gathered the older boys around her. "We must look for food. Back in Yuan Chu they must have left a few oddments of food. You must go back and search the houses. Look everywhere. We must find a little food."

The children went on playing in the shallows. The boys trailed off to look for food in the deserted village of Yuan Chu. Gladys sat on the bank and watched the sun climbing up the sky. She felt sick. *If only a boat would come!* she thought. *If only a boat would come!*

Three hours later, the boys came back triumphant. They had scavenged for food in the deserted village of Yuan Chu and each bore some small contribution, a few pounds of mouldy millet in the bottom of a rotting basket; a few dusty-looking, flat, hard cakes of dough, from under a shop counter. It was all boiled in the communal pot over a fire of dried reeds, and the result ladled carefully into the forest of waving basins. There was not enough for Gladys or Sualan or the older boys, but the younger children were fed.

The sun rose high, and still no boat moved on the surface of the river. The boys went off to search for more food along the banks; there were a few scattered houses there. Gladys sat quietly watching the children, half alert for the distant rifle fire that would herald the approach of the enemy.

The boys came back with a few more scraps of food which she hoarded for the next day.

That night the children huddled together on the bank of the great river and whimpered before they went to sleep.

"Ai-weh-deh, we're hungry."

"Ai-weh-deh, when are we going to cross the river?"

They ate the last crumbs of food on the third day at the bank of the Yellow River.

The sun rose and the children grew tired of racing along the banks. Gladys told them stories and they sang songs together, and her eyes were sore from staring at the water in search of a boat. As the sun went down again, the children crept close to her so that she could touch them with her hands. On the morning of the fourth day even the youngest children had caught the mood of despair.

It was then that Sualan said: "Ai-weh-deh, do you remember telling us how Moses took the children of Israel to the waters of the Red Sea? And how God commanded the water to open and the Israelites crossed in safety?"

"Yes, I remember," Gladys replied gently.

"Then why does not God open the waters of the Yellow River for us to cross?"

Gladys looked wearily at the pretty, childish face, with the ingenuous wide eyes. "I am not Moses, Sualan," she said.

"But God is always God, Ai-weh-deh. You have told us so a hundred times. If He is God, He can open the river for us."

For a moment Gladys did not know what to say. How to tell a hungry child on the banks of an immense and wide-flowing river that miracles were not just for the asking?

She said: "Let you and I kneel down and pray, Sualan. And perhaps soon our prayers will be answered."

NEXT WEEK: Gladys is told, "You are under arrest"

MY SISTER Ruth

WE loved acting, and once put on a play called *It Pays To Advertise*. Ruth was delighted when one of her friends in the cast said that, if we were careful, we could borrow her mother's genuine Royal Crown Derby tea set.

I was not anxious to be responsible for such a valuable prop, but Ruth was determined to accept the offer. At the end of the first scene the butler made an imposing exit with the tray held high above his head, and I noticed my sister giving an appreciative smile to the owner of the tea set who was sitting in the front row. Then the lights went out—and there was a tremendous crash.

The second scene followed immediately. The lights went up to reveal the cast standing motionless, shocked into silence. The long pause was dreadful. White-faced but determined, Ruth saved the play by feverishly "gagging" until the cast—and the audience—recovered their composure.

Ruth was for ever knocking herself about. In fact, I cannot remember a time in her childhood when some part of her anatomy was not bandaged. We both loved swimming and, although I am a few years older, she insisted on trying all the dives I tried.

One day she practised "duck diving." This meant she could not use her hands, and I watched anxiously as she tried it for the first time off the top board. She dived too steeply and I knew she must have hit her head on the bottom. Dazed, but smiling, she managed to swim to the side of the pool. She spent the next few days in bed recovering from concussion—but she never recovered her enthusiasm for diving.

Ruth always wanted to go on the stage, but Father would not hear of it. However, when a friend of the family saw my sister in an amateur production he made secret arrangements for her to understudy Wendy Hiller in *Love On The Dole*. Father agreed, and off to London she went.

A few months later Ruth had a chance of playing the lead herself. Of course, I went to see her. Unfortunately, it was the one performance when everything went wrong. First of all, during one of her speeches, the leg of a sofa broke, and the audience watched fascinated as the leg rolled slowly down the stage and came to rest with a little thud at the footlights.

Then, when Ruth recovered and moved on to her next business, she had to eat an apple. This was terrible to watch, for poor Ruth choked on it and I was horrified to see her face going black and blue. Thank goodness it was the end of the scene and the curtain was brought down very quickly.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS SISTER? See page 44

Sapphires on Wednesday

Continued from page 25

were shutters on the windows, and the room was in dark twilight. He went over to a window and gave the shutters a push.

Beyond the lake were hills, climbing from gentle slopes to precipices and ridges, soaring, in the misty distance, into great snow-capped peaks. On the opposite shore were villas, like toys; and, flooding all the scene, was the burning golden sun of Italy.

Mark stood looking for a long time in silence. Then he heard a movement behind him and Audie stood by his side.

With an effort he brought his thoughts back to the business in hand. He asked: "Which is the Malatino villa?"

Audie joined him in scanning the opposite shore. She said: "The pink one with the most trees."

Mark strained his eyes across the water. The Malatino villa, like the others, was clearly visible, a neat doll's house.

It was coloured a rosy, sun-baked pink, romantically pretty. And it contained a murderess, a desperate woman no longer quite sane, who, last night, had drunk herself into a stupor.

Mark had found a pair of binoculars in the bathing club. He fetched them and returned to the window. He focused them on the villa. As he did so, the pink house leaped to his eyes; instead of being a mile away, it seemed to be only two or three hundred yards. He saw a faint plume of bluish smoke rising straight up into the air from one of the chimneys, and he thought he saw a dog moving in the trees beyond the house.

"Madame Malatino's curtains are still undrawn," he said.

"They would be," Audie said. "She never gets up before ten."

Mark put down the glasses. "I'm hungry," he said. "Let's go and eat. . . ."

AFTER breakfast, they took a leisurely walk along the lakeside. "Any fishing in the lake?" Mark asked.

"People *do* fish sometimes," Audie said. "But I've never heard of them catching anything."

There was a small boathouse, containing three boats, attached to the bathing club. Mark found a fishing line but there were no hooks for it.

"Doesn't matter," he said. "Wouldn't catch any more fish if we did have hooks. With a line we can go up and down over the same water without anyone thinking it funny." Looking at the boats again, he saw that one had metal hoops secured to the gunwale. "I suppose you rig canvas on these, like a covered wagon?"

"Yes. That's the traditional boat of the lake."

"I wonder if we could find the screens?"

"I doubt it. These boats were all bought about fifth-hand."

"We could have a look." There was hardly anywhere in the boathouse where anything could be hidden, and after a minute Mark found a roll of dirty canvas. "That'll do," he said.

The boat was long, narrow, and flat-bottomed. It pulled easily out across the glassy water, into the sun-soaked centre of the lake. Audie hoisted the screen, and Mark pulled towards the Malatino villa.

A couple of hundred yards from the shore he asked Audie to row and, running the fishing line out as cover, took a look at the house through the glasses. At that distance it seemed he might almost have put his hand out and touched the stone.

He examined the villa and its surroundings, patiently, for several minutes.

"Madame Malatino is still asleep," he said.

"What do we do?"

"Resume our patrol. Improve our suntan. And wait. . . ."

The sun was already setting, and they were making their third patrol of the day, when Mark spotted the car on

the road, approaching the belt of trees.

"Pull towards the villa," he said. "Not too fast." He focused the glasses, and after a few minutes glimpsed the car running down to the villa through the trees.

"What is it?" Audie asked.

"I'd be very much surprised," Mark said, "if it weren't Miro. The wait is over."

At one moment the last rim of the sun showed, red-gold, over the crest. At the next it had gone, and the whole valley lay in profound shadow. Then, suddenly, a light snapped on in an uncurtained downstairs room of the villa. Watching through the glasses, Mark caught a glimpse, momentary but unmistakable, of the heavy shoulders and white face of Miro Ablondi.

Mark took a deep breath. "Take down that screen," he said. He did not take his eyes from the glasses.

Audie obeyed. She rowed in until they were only about four hundred yards away from the villa.

"Closer," Mark said.

They went on in, and gradually the house became clearer. A movement inside the room suddenly made sense of the pattern. Mark was looking straight at Miro Ablondi, who was sitting back in an armchair.

The movement was Miro's right arm, moving repeatedly in a series of gestures, stabbing at the air. He was talking to someone, and it could, of course, only be to Mme Malatino.

MARK thought he could hear Miro's loud, harsh voice from inside the room, but he could not make out the words. Loud as Miro's voice was, they would have to be right outside the window to do that. And he dared not go any nearer. Already he was expecting, every minute, to hear the savage barking of the dogs.

Audie leaned forward and whispered across the space between them: "I could swim in."

Mark thought for a moment. The dogs would hardly scent a swimmer.

"All right," he said. "I'll cover you with my gun. I'll pull out now while you undress. Then you go over the side, and I'll pull you in to about seventy yards."

They changed places, and Mark took the oars. Audie slipped her skirt off and in a moment there was a flash of white as she pulled her slip over her head. Mark caught a faint warm breath of scent. A moment later she was slipping one pale leg over the side.

"Keep low in the water as you swim," Mark told her. "Hear what you can. Don't stay too long." He felt the boat's bows lift as Audie knelt on the stern. Then she lowered herself quickly and quietly.

Mark pulled back towards the villa, feeling the drag of Audie's body. At about seventy yards he stopped, tapped the gunwale gently, and the trim of the boat changed.

A moment later Audie was swimming past with a slow breast stroke. She did not pause or look round. After about ten strokes she disappeared in the gathering darkness.

Mark felt for his rolled-up jacket under the seat, took the Luger out of the pocket and put it on his knee. It was no use at this distance, except perhaps to make Miro keep his head down, but that might be important.

He could see nothing, hear nothing of Audie. A colder evening breeze moved across the lake, and he shivered abruptly.

Ten minutes passed . . . a quarter of an hour. It was darker now, and the cool off-shore breeze was steadier. Mark put the binoculars carefully under the seat, slipped the safety-catch on the Luger, and gave another pull at the oars.

As soon as he picked up the glasses again, he saw Audie; at least, he saw a pale blur which must be her head and shoulders, just out of the water, about three feet below the open window.

Another ten minutes passed. As he shivered again, he realized that his shirt was damp with sweat all down his back. He lowered the glasses a moment to ease the strain on his arms. When he raised them, he saw that Audie was inching up towards the sill

of the window. Then, as he watched, she suddenly disappeared.

Mark heard the splash in the same instant. In the stillness it sounded like a small explosion. And at the same moment the sound he had been waiting for struck at his nerves: the dogs—a single growling bark, and then the frantic staccato howl.

He saw Miro jump to his feet and rush to the window. *"Chi va . . . chi? . . . barca, nella barca?"*

The challenge rang out sharply in Miro's loud harsh voice. Then Audie appeared in the water beside the boat, and Mark leaned over the stern to help her. As his arm went round her shoulders he heard Miro's voice again, louder, harsher, more urgent: *"Rispondi subito . . . o sparò."*

"Mark—look out—he's going to shoot." As she spoke, Audie fell stiffly forward from the stern.

Looking at the window Mark saw Miro leaning out, his arm stiff in front of him. Mark picked up the Luger, slipped off the catch, and fired, almost without aiming. As he did so, he heard the sharp *crack* of Miro's gun and water splashed white on his left.

Mark fired again, just as the lights went out in the room. Then he picked up the oars and, with all his power, buried the blades and pulled.

Miro's gun cracked out again . . . and again. In the darkness Mark saw the sudden brilliant stab of flame endways on, with no length to it. The boat jarred, and he heard Audie gasp. He pulled harder and the boat, already moving with some speed, leaped forward. Another stroke, another shot, and they were out of effective range.

Audie was crouching in the bottom of the boat, gasping for breath and shaking convulsively. She rubbed herself down quickly, clenching her teeth to stop them chattering.

"They were having a row." The words burst out of her as soon as she was able to speak. "She said he had made a mess of it—blundered, underestimated you. He said that was her fault—she had picked you. They went on and on about that."

Audie pulled on Mark's jacket, and then wrapped over her shoulders the canvas screen, which had been stowed away under the stern seat. After a few moments her shuddering became less convulsive. She turned and looked over her shoulder back at the villa.

"Miro was talking about evidence," she continued. "He sent my aunt a cable. It told her to destroy all the papers in his safe. At least that's what she understood. But it seems there's something she didn't do, Mark——"

Audie broke off for an instant to glance over her shoulder again. Then she went on: "You see, he also meant her to destroy something else as well, papers which are at Tony's estate in Lombardy. They're going there now.

"That's what they were beginning to talk about when I slipped. But I did hear something. The papers are just a few letters written by Miro to her. She left them in a cupboard there. I knew you would want to go there."

Mark hesitated for a moment in his long even stroke. "Yes," he said. "Of course. But if I could have got into his garage and put a bullet through his petrol tank—"

"—You would have delayed them. But don't worry. They've delayed themselves. She's lost the key of the cupboard. . . ."

Gravel spurted from under the wheels of the Lancia as Mark turned it up the cliff track from the bathing club. "Take a look across at the villa," he said, as they climbed above the lower level of trees.

Audie adjusted the focus of the binoculars. "Oh, Mark," she said, "there's a glow among the trees—it's headlights. Miro must have got the car out. When I was listening, he said they would have to find the key. It was some kind of special lock."

"That was before he knew we were around," said Mark grimly. "In the present circumstances he'll jemmy it, or shoot the lock off. Where are the headlights?"

"Moving up to the road."

Mark changed down and pulled the wheel round hard for the acute turn on to the road. "Where are the headlights now?" he said grimly.

She lifted the glasses. "A bit ahead. But they've farther to go, on their side of the lake."

Mark glanced at the speedometer; it showed he was already doing over a hundred kilometres an hour, faster than was safe. Other things being equal, he had no doubt of his ability to outdrive Miro Ablondi, but he did not mean to go off the road in doing it.

"A quarter mile ahead now," Audie said, scanning the opposite shore through the glasses.

The stone wall on Mark's right became a grey streak; the headlights created fantastic patterns out of orchards and boulder-strewn slopes.

"They've disappeared into the trees at the head of the lake," Audie said.

"When do we meet?" asked Mark.

"About a mile."

The road began to turn away from the lake and wind up the hill. The Lancia rose to it like a bird. But, as they emerged from the belt of trees they were still a hundred yards from the junction of the two roads—and Mark saw headlights fifty yards from it on the other road. Miro was leading on the first lap. As the car flashed by through the Lancia's headlights Mark saw that it was a black Mercédès.

The Lancia lost twenty yards on the turn, and was seventy yards behind as the Mercédès began the winding climb over the hills to Maggiore. Miro was a competent driver, on a road he must know as well as the drive down to the villa; but Mark had the advantage of many an afternoon's hill-climbing tests. He gained yards on every turn and, as the turns became the characteristic hairpin bends of the Alpine *lacet*, his gear-juggling and clipping of corners pulled the Mercédès back into his lap.

The final run up to the crest was a hundred yards almost straight, a long diagonal up the side of the hill. Miro was holding the middle of the road and, as the Lancia moved up to overtake, the Mercédès moved over in the same direction.

The two cars arrived at the summit nose to tail. At the summit the road turned back on itself, in a hairpin bend. Miro took the inside; Mark, seeing a foot of grass verge on the off-side, ran the Lancia up on it. The car leaned over abruptly as the wheels mounted, and Audie gasped.

As the Lancia came down on to the road again, its bonnet was level with the front door of the Mercédès. A moment later the two cars were neck and neck, approaching the first bend of the downward slope. Now Mark was on the inside and Miro on the outside, and Mark brought the Lancia round as though it were held to the inside of the bend by suction.

He was almost past the Mercédès now, and began to pull across into the middle of the road. But Miro, in one last attempt to crowd him out, refused to give place. For a few moments the two cars were inches apart.

Audie glanced across at Mark, and Mark's eyes were on the road ahead. Thus neither of them saw exactly what happened next. Audie's first impression was that the Mercédès had, by some miraculous effort, passed them. She saw its great black shape rising up beside them, and then heard an immense smashing noise. Looking back she saw a fantastic interlacing pattern of lights as the Mercédès somersaulted down the hill.

The Lancia came to rest athwart the road. Mark took the torch from the pocket beside him and ran back, flashing the beam down the hill. The slope was steep, covered with big grey rocks and scrub up to ten feet high, and he saw no sign of the Mercédès. There was no sign even of where it had passed; and, apart from a noise of wind in the scrub, and of Audie's feet running to join him, the stillness was absolute.

"Down here," he said.

He began to run and jump down the slope, the scrub whipping his face and catching at his legs. He had gone down about fifty yards when he heard a sound like running water on his left, and turned his torch on it.

It was the Mercédès. The car was

SCANDAL—4

A cruel story runs on wheels, and every hand oils the wheels as they run.

Ouida

MY SISTER RUTH

See page 43

Ruth Dunning, television's "Mrs. Grove," is Mr. Jim Dunning's sister

lying against a boulder almost as big as itself. It had been battered savagely, the doors had been burst out of it, and the roof was concertinaed into the body.

Mark went across to it, and shone his torch into the inside. A dark figure lay collapsed at the foot of the well formed by the front seat and the windscreen.

He put his torch down and examined the body for a few seconds, carefully. It was Gioia Malatino. Her white face, with the eyes half open and blank, was staring up at him from a curious angle. Apart from other injuries, her neck had been broken exactly as though she had been hanged.

"It's Gioia Malatino," he said. "She's dead."

"Where's Miro?" Audie asked breathlessly.

"Thrown clear on the way down."

They began to climb the slope, throwing the beam of the torch on the rocks and scrub. They continued upwards on parallel courses for a time that might have been three minutes.

"Mark—here!"

From Audie's voice Mark knew she had found him. He went over and flicked on his torch.

Miro lay face downwards among some heather. His left foot was badly crushed, a mass of sock and shoe and splintered bone. Blood was welling out in a series of pulses.

Mark took off his tie and made a tourniquet, forcing it down on the white, hairy skin with a strong twig.

"He's bleeding from the head," Audie said. "I can feel it."

Mark lifted Miro's head. There was a jagged tear above the right eye. He felt Miro's pulse. "Look, Audie," Mark said, "his pulse isn't especially weak. You go back to the road, and drive into Arona. Get an ambulance."

"All right."

"Don't say anything you don't have to, and don't answer any questions," Mark warned her. "Have a glass of brandy if you feel bad. Go along."

For a few moments he heard her picking her way over the rough ground. Then there was silence. It was perhaps five minutes later when he heard Miro stir.

"Lie still," he said. "You're all right."

There was a silence, then Miro stirred again. "Where am I?" he whispered.

"Off the road between Orta and Arona. You had an accident. An ambulance is coming."

"Who are you?"

"Mark Raeburn," Mark said grimly. "Remember me?"

Miro didn't answer. Instead he said, after a moment, "My feet are numb. Am I hurt bad?"

"One foot is badly injured."

There was another silence. Mark had the impression that Miro had let his eyes close.

"And my sister?" Miro asked, after a while.

"Your sister is dead."

"She's lucky. It's more than she deserves. But for her, I'd have got away with it." He groaned. "How long will the ambulance be?"

"Maybe half an hour. Are you in pain?"

"Not yet. I don't feel anything below my knees."

They waited. Mark said: "How did you get out of the cellar at May Island House?"

"There was a spare key for the door. You should have thought of that." Even now, Miro's voice was contemptuous.

There was another silence. The wind stirred in the undergrowth. Then Miro said: "Listen, Raeburn, if you want to be so goddam kind, get me something."

"What?"

"My gun."

Mark did not move. Very far away, over by Maggiore, was the hoot of a motor-horn. Or perhaps this time it was an owl.

"I don't have to plead with you, do I?" Miro's voice rose, and Mark saw a movement, as though he were trying to sit up. "Don't force me to go on living, Raeburn. I never asked anyone for pity before. I'm asking for it now. Get me my gun. There's a bag in the car, in the boot at the back. It has two thousand American dollars in it, in twenties and hundreds. No one knows I have them. You can have them if you get me my gun."

"If no one knows you have them," said Mark quietly, "I could take them anyway."

"No. You wouldn't do it. You're an honest man, Raeburn. Raeburn—the ambulance will be here soon. The pain's getting worse. For God's sake have mercy on me." The American accent was failing; Miro had become a man struggling with a foreign language.

Mark stood up. "If you will write out a brief confession of the murder of Tony Ablondi, I will give you your gun."

"What do you wish I should write?"

"I, the undersigned Miro Ablondi, confess to the murder of my nephew Antonio Ablondi and to planning with my sister Gioia Malatino to make this murder appear to be the work of Mark Raeburn. My motive was——"

"Very well," Miro said heavily. "I will write."

Slowly, but quite firmly and legibly, he wrote his confession with a ballpoint pen in the "June" pages of his pocket diary, leaning in Mark's arms. When he came to the end he added a sentence: *"I take my life in my right mind, without fear and without repentance."*

Mark went down to the car. The gun, Miro had told him, was in a pocket in the door by the driver's seat. He found the door ten yards higher up the hill, and took out of the pocket a nine millimetre Mauser.

He went back to him. "Here is your gun," he said. "I've taken out all the cartridges except one. Can I do anything else for you?"

"Yes. Leave me."

Mark turned away and walked up the hill, without glancing back. He had almost reached the road when he heard the shot. He turned back and made his way down again. Miro, he saw, had been as efficient as he had been speedy.

Mark took the diary from his pocket and placed it, open and face down, on Miro's chest. Then he went to the car. The boot, like the doors, had been torn open, and in it there was a briefcase. When he opened it, he found in it, as Miro had said, two thousand

Winter at the Seaside

by R. P. LISTER

Across the rime-rimmed sea the bergs come floating;
The wind blows chilly from the polar latitudes.
This is no kind of time to go a-boating
Or lie along the shore in leisurely attitudes.

See, on the far horizon whales are spouting;
The spray is colder than the clutch of charity.
This is no kind of weather to go on an outing,
Or stroll about the Prom with vulgar hilarity.

Better to eat a bird with savoury stuffing,
To drink some nameless wine of any old quality,
And stump about the woolly hearth-rug, puffing
Cigars, and treating the world with utter frivolity.

The depths of winter, being so grave and injurious,
Must be met with gaiety, even if it is spurious.

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dollars. He took ten hundred-dollar notes, rolled them up, and put them in his pocket. He saw no reason why he should forgo the fee that was owed to him.

Then he climbed up to the road to await the ambulance. . . .

Blue and indistinct in the heat haze stood a dispersed group of four oil derricks. Mark was driving the Lancia along the road towards them, with Audie sitting beside him.

"But Mark," Audie said, "I still don't quite understand. Miro was so far in the red, it would have needed an enormous oil strike to put him right. Was he gambling everything on this?"

"Not necessarily," Mark said. "As there had been a big strike twenty kilometres from here, public opinion would have been ready for another. Miro would have issued a dishonest prospectus—he could have hired or fixed some phoney expert opinion for it. After all, that's what he'd been for years, ever since the war, a dishonest company promoter. He would have floated an oil company and syphoned the money off into those other companies of his that were about to crash."

"But if they didn't strike oil here, then *this* would have crashed."

"By the time this was going to crash, he would have got some money back into it from some new racket. That's how it's done."

"You have to find new rackets all the time?"

"Yes. I bet we'll find that as soon as Miro heard about oil finds in the Lombardy plain, he prospected every inch of the property. As he was the tenant—Tony Ablondi's tenant—he could do that without any fuss. He could even put up a derrick or two without Tony's knowledge.

"But he couldn't float a company without Tony knowing. If Miro was going to salt the claim, he had to deceive Tony about it. That wouldn't have been easy. Tony was the actual proprietor and was responsible. The alternative was to get rid of Tony.

"But of course he had another, even stronger reason for getting rid of Tony. Miro stood to inherit Tony's landed property in Italy. . . . And that is where I came into it."

"How do you mean, where you came in?"

"You know how important motive is in a murder investigation?" Mark said. "A person with a motive is automatically investigated. If Miro's part in Tony's death had seemed at all suspicious, the New York police would have got on to the Italian police, in order to see whether the inheritance—which was *prima facie* a motive—was a strong motive.

"To establish that, the Italian police would have had to investigate Miro's financial position. He couldn't risk that. He had to deflect attention—and that was the rôle I was cast for. Deflecting attention like that is the crooked financier's special trick."

For a while there was silence. Then Audie said: "And Varia? How did you know about Varia?"

"You told me."

"I told you?"

"Yes. You told me Miro didn't treat him well, didn't pay him well, and yet he was loyal. Why? Blackmail, obviously.

"You told me Varia was a dangerous man, and so he was. He turned the tables on Miro—he had more on Miro than Miro had on him. That isn't surprising, as Miro was getting deeper into troubled water. It was because he was dangerous that he was killed. . . ."

On the day following the visit to Tony's estate in the plain, Mark and Audie took the Lancia up a road which led out of the foothills towards the higher Alps.

After a while Mark stopped the car and turned to Audie.

"We shall get our passports back tomorrow," he said.

"How do you know?"

"I don't know for certain, but some papers from Tony Ablondi's estate arrived in Milan last night, and they must pretty well complete the picture. We've sworn affidavits. There will be no trial, since there's no one to try. I don't suppose they will have any further use for us."

There was a silence. Then Audie said: "Mark?"

"Yes."

"You remember how you said that you and I might have been happy together?"

"Yes," he said. "I remember."

Audie said quietly: "I thought we might have been, too, but I don't feel so now. Not really when—when I force myself to look at it."

Mark looked at her sharply. He said: "What's changed your mind?"

Audie said: "I'm an ordinary girl and I want ordinary things. But you don't belong in the ordinary, settled world. These things that happened in the last few days—shooting, and chasing, and crime—for me they're an interlude, but for you they're the real world."

"How do you know all this?" Mark asked curiously.

"Well, it seems a small thing——"

"You're quite a detective," Mark said dryly. "You even know about the importance of small things."

Audie said very seriously: "It was when you were overtaking the Mercédès, on the crest of the hill, and coming down, crowding him out." She looked at him, sharply, suddenly, as though a thought had just occurred to her. "Did you have some idea that Miro might be forced off the road?"

"Well," Mark said cautiously. "I knew I was crowding him. Why?"

"I looked at you then. And you were smiling. . . ."

Audie left next day, and arrived at the airport alone. She would not let Mark go with her. . . .

As the passengers arrived for her flight, the air-hostess broke off from her job of arranging cups on trays, took up her place at the head of the steps, and switched on her professional smile to welcome the passengers. They looked a boring lot.

Then, with a flicker of interest, she saw the American girl. She was obviously American, although her shoes were Italian and her suit had probably been made in Paris. She was bare-headed and very fair, her ash-blonde hair stirring faintly in the breeze that blew across the airfield.

And she was rich. The hostess could always tell the really rich, even when they were discreetly turned out.

The hostess looked again, a quick, reading glance. It was interesting, really, being an air-hostess. One saw many things. Things one could tell one's friends, and speculate about. As, for instance, why this beautiful American had been weeping so much that her eyes were red and puffy. . . .

On the following day Mark was back in London. He went straight to Walter Guest's office and told him the whole story.

Walter heard him out. Then there was a long silence.

"I say, Mark," Walter said at last, uneasily. "There's one thing I feel pretty unhappy about. Apart, I mean, from——" He hesitated.

"—From your feelings of guilt and shame about turning your innocent friend loose in the lion's den?"

"Damn it, Mark," Walter protested, "it's all very well to laugh, but I *did* put you in touch with Madame Malatino. And not only does she turn out to be a dangerous criminal, but. . . ." He broke off again.

"You're not by any chance," said Mark, "thinking of the—er—the monetary aspect?" His Scottish accent came out strongly in "monetarry."

"Well, I was rather. I mean, after all——"

Mark put his hand in his breast pocket and drew out a roll of hundred-dollar notes.

"My God!" said Walter. "Where did you get that?"

"Och!" said Mark. "That's a wee detail I omitted to tell you." He told Walter now.

"All the same, Mark, the whole thing was a crazy thing to do," Walter said. He rose suddenly to his feet. "I mean, I know I'm a lawyer, and cautious and all that kind of thing, but I should have thought——"

Mark smiled. "Walter," he said, "you kindly put one of the drawers in your desk at my disposal. You haven't opened it, of course."

"Of course not!"

"Open it now."

Walter came round and opened the right-hand drawer. It contained only one item: an envelope addressed in Mark's hand to "Walter Guest, Esq."

"Open it."

Walter picked up an ivory paper knife and slit the envelope. From it he took a document.

"It's an enlarged photograph of Madame Malatino's card," Walter said. "'Received from my brother. . . .' Well, this is the card she gave you."

"Quite," Mark said. "I had it photographed. If necessary, I'd have sent you a cable asking you to produce it."

"So you had it all the time," said Walter. "Documentary evidence of the truth of your story."

"If I hadn't had that," said Mark, "I shouldn't have gone. Madame Malatino underestimated her opponent. It's a foolish mistake."

"If *you* are the opponent, it is."

Mark shrugged. "All I claim," he said, "is a wee bit of common sense." Suddenly he grinned, picked up the roll of notes and put it in his pocket. "You need a bit of common sense in this precarious profession on which I'm embarking."

THE END

"Sapphires On Wednesday," by Malcolm Gair, will be published as a book in May by Collins at 10s. 6d.

OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER

Old Murgatroyd, head of the "most dreadful" family in all the country, murdered a guest

The lesser landed gentry who inhabited the grim, remote manor houses of the West Riding dales were often wild and ruthless men. The Murgatroyd family of East Riddlesden Hall was no exception. Many of them came to violent or tragic ends.

A clergyman who visited the hall in the seventeenth century wrote of the Murgatroyds: "That family is the most dreadful instance in the country; all that know them tell strange tales of them."

James Murgatroyd, who bought the East Riddlesden property in 1638, was a rich clothier. He practically rebuilt the old hall on a bend of the River Aire.

He and his three sons were accused of perpetrating terrible but unmentionable offences in the porch of a local church. The father was fined £500 and excommunicated.

Murgatroyd is said to have murdered one of his guests in the small room over the porch. His eldest son contracted many large debts, made no provision for his children, and was a "profane and debauched man."

The last three of the Murgatroyd family were all imprisoned for debt.

One of them, Thomas, tried to escape and in consequence had both his feet fettered with heavy irons for six years so that he could never take off his clothes, until they had to be cut off. These miserable events put an end to the Murgatroyds.

There is little wonder that the River Aire, according to popular tradition, changed its course in protest at their doings.

Earlier, at the time of the Reformation, a family named Paslew owned East Riddlesden Hall. They staunchly adhered to the old religion. For his share in the religious uprising known as the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536-7, John Paslew was hanged at his own door.

The Paslews were succeeded by the Rishworths. This family was ruined by a lawsuit with the great Lady Anne Clifford of Skipton and Appleby Castles.

She was a businesslike and exacting landlord. The Rishworths, who rented one of her farms, had to make her an annual payment of one hen. But they resolutely refused to honour it.

Lady Anne was determined not to lose her hen, one of eight hundred similar rights dating from the thirteenth century.

At enormous legal cost to herself and the defendant she won her case. She is then said to have had the hen roasted and served to Mr. Rishworth.

How to get there: East Riddlesden Hall is one mile from Keighley. *Open:* Daily except Thursdays, 2 till 4.

SHE WON £1,500—SO CAN YOU!

50 "Bullets" New Year Cheques for Big Three Wishes Offer!

"I AM living in a world of dreams come true. It is a simply *wonderful* feeling to have so *much* money in the bank!" Those words come from Mrs. I. Leigh (9 Strathaird Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness), who has just banked £1,500 for a *Bullet*.

Follow Mrs. Leigh to a £1,500 fortune in this first *Bullets* Contest of 1957, in which FIFTY New Year cheques *must* be won. As First Prize-winner three extra thrills would be *yours*—Three Wishes fulfilled by the famous *Bullets* Magic Lamp!

£300 CASH plus THREE WISHES

£25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 3 of £5, 10 of £3, 50s, 49s, 48s, 47s, 46s, 45s, 44s, 43s, 42s, 41s, 40s, 39s, 38s, 37s, 36s, 35s, 34s, 33s, 32s, 31s, 30s, 29s, 28s, 27s, 26s, 5 of 25s.

1,500 "GOOD SHOT" PRIZES

and £2 "Bullets" SEASONS—see coupon below

HOW TO WIN—ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS TO ANY "EXAMPLE"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet*.

Nation ✍ Nation
To Stop The Rising
Gambler John
Man On The Spot
With Faith Undimmed
That Tattered Flag
Unmasked The Villain
Fleeing In Terror
A Broken Toy
So Much Nicer
My Good Fairy
Caused A Shemozzle
When Grandpa Celebrated
They're In Love, So
Preparing The Way
Crushed And Dispirited
Effie's A Caution, But
A Grim Jest
In The Red
If Sonny Ran The School

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

In A.....State
Getting A Free.....
..... Brainwave
One In The Eye For.....
To End The.....
.....Of The People

Most meritorious of the "£300 plus —" First Prize "Bullets" in Contests 2,067 to 2,072 wins £1,500 cash — the First Prize cheque with Tournament Award added.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross / & Co. /, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated February 9), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.
(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, January 26, for early news of *Bullets* No. 2,072 result.)

Address Entry "Bullets" 2,072, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99.

CHIEF WINNERS—"BULLETS" No. 2,067

FIRST PRIZE, £300 (or £1,500 if Tournament winner) plus TV and Turkey: Mrs. C. C. Fraser, "Tigris One," Boyers Wharf, Moorhall Road, Harefield, Middlesex:

The Old Folks—Have Given—Give Haven!

£25: R. S. Campkin, 6 Churchill Avenue, Horsham: ROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE—"UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS"—*Then* "SAUCERS"! £10: J. B. Beggs, 73 Hillmount Gardens, Finaghy, Belfast: IF EVERYONE WERE RICH—HAPPY THOUGHT—*Happy*, THOUGH? OTHER AWARDS: £9: Mrs. M. Mason, (Bottom Flat) 9 Acland Road, Bournemouth: IN LIFE'S STOCKING—"MAGICIAN'S SET"—FOR "*Performer*"! £8: Mr. A. F. Parry, 56 Parkhill Road, Prenton, Birkenhead: SONNY'S GIFT—WORTH PUTTING "STOCKING" INTO! £7: P. J. Bernard, 308 Royal Palace Hotel, London, W.8.: THOSE BELLS—LAST "TUNE" *I* CALLED! £6: Mrs. J. S. Robson, 55 Glebe Road, Hinckley: IN LIFE'S STOCKING—PARENTS *Can't* PUT EVERYTHING! £5: R. Cole, 30 Cardinal Avenue, St. Budeaux, Plymouth: TRIP TO THE CLOUDS—TOWING JONESES TO GARAGE! £5: C. Hearn, 41 Stuart Road, Gravesend: SONNY'S GIFT—TO PARENTS—PATIENCE, RESTRAINT! £5: E. Jones, 83 Lake Street, Ferndale, Glamorgan: FIVE TO FOLLOW—"SYSTEM" DAD'S *Greyhound* OPERATES!
(Each winner from £25 to £5 received also a Christmas Turkey.)
For ten winners of £2 10s. plus Turkey see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 30 Fowls, 50 Cakes and 1,500 "Good Shots" have also been posted.
(Tournament winner will be announced in earliest possible JOHN BULL.)

WIN £1,500 WITH THIS COUPON

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BULLET
EX. ..... 6d.
B.
EX. ..... 6d.
B.
EX. ..... 6d.
B.
EX. ..... 6d.
B.

£2 "BULLETS" SEASONS — A £2 *Bullets* Season Ticket accompanies each of the 50 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,072 CLOSING POSTMARK MON., JANUARY 14 — I agree to rules and enclose P.O. Value..... No.....

Signed.....
Address.....
.....
844

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Next week—FREE £100,000 DICTIONARY OF WINNERS FOR YOU!

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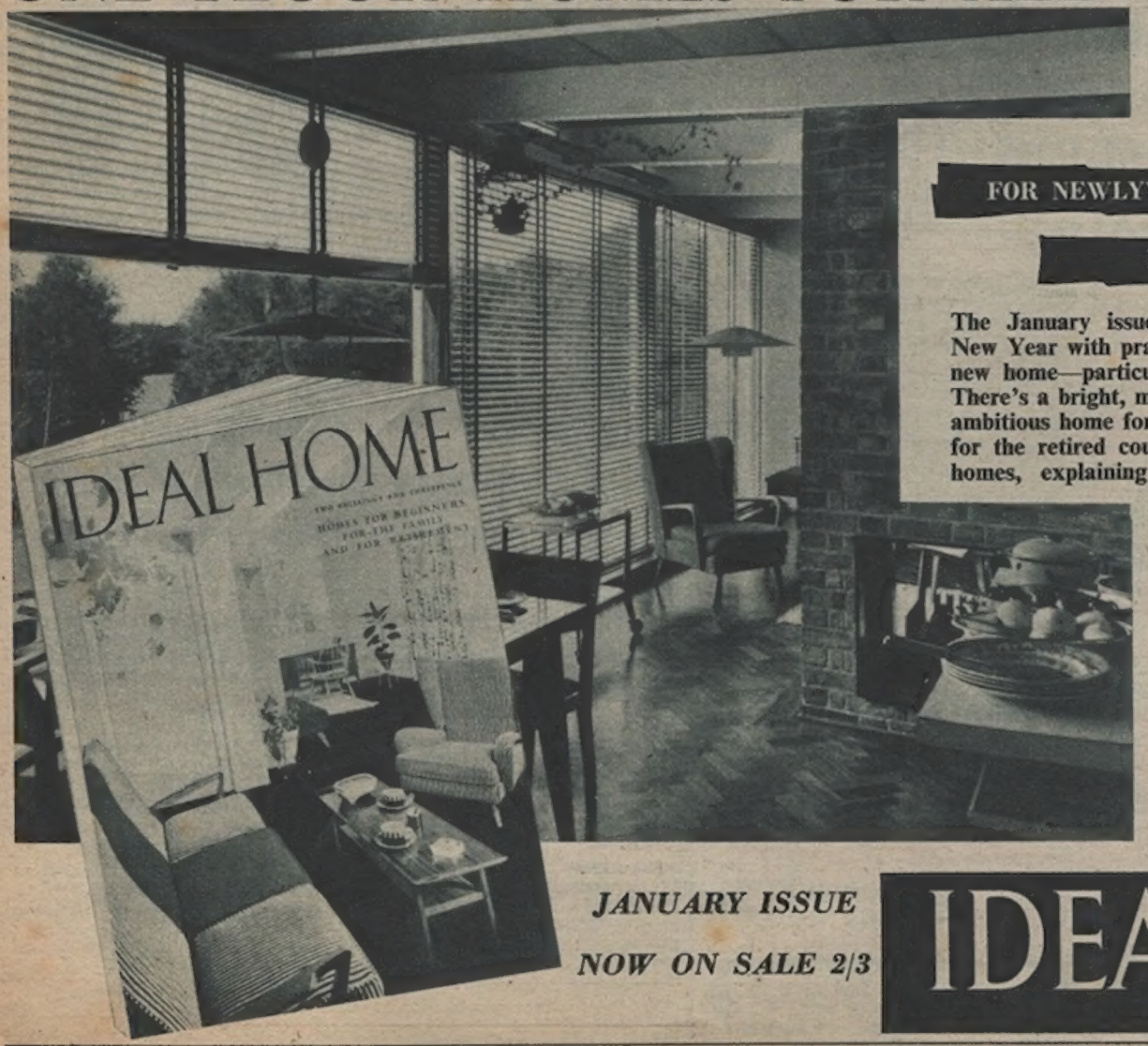

Scores of practical ideas together with plans and numerous pictures of new one-floor homes

FOR NEWLYWEDS — FOR FAMILIES — FOR RETIREMENT

The January issue of IDEAL HOME Magazine greets the New Year with practical ideas and plans to help you build your new home—particularly if you are limited by a strict budget. There's a bright, modern home for the newlyweds, a larger more ambitious home for the growing family, and a trouble-free home for the retired couple. Experts tell you about these one-story homes, explaining their special features, showing how, for instance the "minimum house for beginners" can be expanded later on. And there are more practical ideas on how to furnish the smaller one-story house.

ALSO in the JANUARY ISSUE
FURNISHING FOR RETIREMENT—chosen for elderly people in a new, small home; GARDENS PLANNED BY STAGES—designs which can be adapted as needs alter; PROBLEM HOUSE INTO FAMILY HOME; NINE KINDS OF DINING-ROOM; INGENIOUS IDEAS FOR NEW-YEAR PARTIES; BEFORE YOU BUILD OR BUY—safety-first precautions for the home-maker; and many other practical articles.

JANUARY ISSUE

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